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Iran hates atomic bomb — Rafsanjani

NICOSIA (AFP) — Iran's President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said Sunday his country hated atomic weapons, countering accusations that Tehran was trying to develop a nuclear capability. "We really hate the atomic bomb, Islam has prevented us from such adventurism," he told the U.S. television channel Cable News Network (CNN) in a live interview. It was the first interview of its kind filmed in Tehran, as Iranian leaders never appear live, even on official state media. The United States has charged that Iran is trying to gain nuclear arms, and slapped an economic embargo on the country which it also accuses of supporting international terrorism. Both charges have always been denied by Tehran. The United States has also tried to persuade Russia to end its nuclear cooperation with Iran and break a billion-dollar contract to build a nuclear plant at Bushehr on the Gulf. But Mr. Rafsanjani said "Russia has been serious about its covenant with us. We don't see any reason why the Russians should surrender to the inappropriate pressures of the U.S."

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي.

Sharif Zeid, team head for Paris

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker on Sunday left Amman for Paris to join His Majesty King Hussein on his visit to the French capital which will start Monday. During the visit, King Hussein will meet with French President Jacques Chirac and senior French officials for talks on Franco-Jordanian relations as well as issues of common interest, namely the Middle East peace process. Sharif Zeid was seen off at the airport by Deputy Prime Minister and Information Minister Khaled Al Karaki and several officials. Leaving along with the prime minister were Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem and Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabarti.

Prisoners relaunch strike

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestinian prisoners campaigning for their release from Israeli jails relaunched their hunger-strike Sunday after Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) failed to strike a deal on extending autonomy, Palestinian sources said. Inmates in jails in Nabhus, Ramallah and Jenin on the occupied West Bank are to go further and step up their campaign by refusing to drink water, the sources said. The fast for freedom, launched two weeks ago, was suspended on Saturday in the hope that PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres would meet a midnight deadline for agreement on spreading Palestinian self-rule across the West Bank.

The PLO has demanded a timetable for prisoner releases as part of the deal. But Mr. Arafat and Mr. Peres failed to reach an agreement in more than eight hours of talks which broke up at dawn Sunday. (see separate story).

The Israeli prison service said only 1,200 prisoners were continuing their fast Saturday out of the 4,000 who joined the hunger-strike campaign.

A spokesman for the Palestinian Mandela Institute, a human rights group, said: "Palestinian prisoners drank milk and some ate eggs on Saturday which, according to international rules, is not considered as breaking a hunger-strike."

The prisoners' refusal to drink water could have drastic consequences in Israel and the West Bank where temperatures have soared above 36 degrees Celsius.

Israel intends to release hundreds of inmates when an autonomy accord is reached and hundreds more after Palestinian elections, but the PLO demands the early release of all 6,500 prisoners.

Israel will release 1,500 Palestinian security detainees as soon as it reaches agreement with the PLO on a West Bank troop withdrawal, the Voice of Palestine Radio said.

Mr. Peres made the pledge (Continued on page 7)



Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres hold talks at the Erez crossing point between Israel and the Gaza Strip late Saturday on a deal to extend Palestinian autonomy to the West Bank (AFP photo)

Israel, PLO to make new bid for self-rule deal

Combined agency dispatches

FOREIGN Minister Shimon Peres and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat will make a fresh attempt on Monday or Tuesday to agree an army redeployment to extend autonomy across the West Bank.

After breaking a Saturday midnight deadline to strike a deal, despite a marathon 8.5-hour meeting at the Erez crossing into the Gaza Strip, the two men decided to hold talks again as soon as possible.

"They may meet again as early as Monday, but it may be Tuesday," a spokesman for Mr. Peres said Sunday.

Israel Radio reported the talks would take place on Monday.

Israel and the PLO set a July 1 target for an agreement, covering an Israeli army redeployment outside Palestinian towns on the West Bank, a transfer of civil powers and elections to a self-rule council.

According to Israel radio, the United States has invited both sides to sign their accord in Washington on July 17. However, Mr. Arafat's spokesman Marwan Kanafani said: "We are waiting to confirm the Peres meeting."

He added that no dates had been set for any signing ceremony in Washington.

Israeli officials sought to play down the importance of the broken deadline, which fell exactly one year after Mr. Arafat's return to Gaza.

"You have to expect such difficulties when you enter the final straight in negotiations," said Environment Minister Yossi Sarid.

"There is really no crisis with the Palestinians and we should sign an agreement with them before the end of the month of July," said Mr. Sarid, one of Israel's autonomy negotiators.

He said the main bone of contention was over control of roads and rural areas on the West Bank.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin wants to maintain

security control over the territory but is prepared to withdraw troops from six of the seven large West Bank towns in stages, Israeli sources said.

Mr. Arafat has demanded a clear timetable for army evacuation of all West Bank towns to enable elections to go ahead quickly.

But Israel has offered to pull out of only four towns — Jenin, Nabhus, Kalkiya and Tulkarem — in a first stage. Ramallah and Bethlehem will come next.

"There is an agreement on a withdrawal from six of the seven cities," said Mr. Sarid. He said Israel would not withdraw from Hebron, where 450 Jews live amidst some 110,000 Palestinians, "because of the special, dangerous and wretched complications in this city."

A Palestinian official said Israel proposed this as a final offer.

Israel also refuses the PLO's demand for a binding timetable for the withdrawal, demanding the right to halt

the process if there are attacks by militants against Israelis.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat said a timeframe was needed because "we are speaking about redeployment of Israeli forces to be matched by Palestinian deployment."

"What Israel is trying to do," said another PLO negotiator, "is to restrict the movements and deployment of the Palestinian police, and to divide the West Bank in an attempt to avoid the establishment of a Palestinian state at the end of the process."

Israel rejected PLO demands to control security in villages and refugee camps near Jewish settlements. It also opposed joint Israeli-Palestinian patrols on roads to settlements, Israeli officials said.

Mr. Arafat wants redeployment over two months from all major West Bank towns, including Hebron which have special security

(Continued on page 7)

Jordan's debt relief process clears major hurdle in U.S.

Special from Washington

THIS WEEK, the complicated legislative process of providing Washington's debt relief for Jordan came one step closer to completion when, after White House officials and lawmakers on Capitol Hill resolved differences over domestic issues in the rescissions bill, the House adopted the measure by 275 to 151 with no controversy over the Kingdom's debt relief.

For reasons related purely to constituent politics, two liberal freshmen senators managed to prevent the adoption of the bill in the Senate, delaying it until July 10 at the earliest, when Congress comes back from its recess.

The agreement between the White House and congressional lawmakers earlier in the week cleared a major hurdle in the bill which makes \$16.1 billion in cuts of previously approved but unspent funds and provides

approximately \$7 billion in disaster relief for California, Oklahoma cities and other programmes such as \$275 million to write off the remainder of Jordan's debt to the U.S.

After the rescissions package passed the House on Thursday, political observers expected the measure to be adopted by the Senate with little difficulty, but the two Democrat Senators — Paul Wellstone of Minnesota and Carol Moseley-Braun of Illinois — exercised stalling tactics on the Senate floor that finally caused Senate majority leader Bob Dole (Kansas) to adjourn the Senate session until he receives assurances that Democrats would not offer any additional amendments or delay the measure.

Once the outstanding differences on domestic issues were resolved between the administration and congressional leaders, the White House issued a statement in support of the rescissions package. Reports indicated

that the White House was apparently unable to influence Sen. Wellstone into approving the measure.

The next step is for the Senate to vote on the measure before it can be sent to the White House to be signed into law by the president. If that takes place without complications for reasons of domestic politics, then the write-off of Jordan's debt to the U.S. will, for all practical purposes, have been provided for. The Clinton administration had requested that Congress appropriate \$275 million in funds in fiscal 1995 in order to be able to write off the remainder of Jordan's debt to the U.S., approximately \$488 million.

No controversy over Jordan's debt surfaced during the congressional debate on the rescissions bill. The debate over the bill takes place at a time of increasingly complicated partisan politics in Washington and in Congress, where Republicans now hold a majority.

Iraq provided missing information, Ekeus says

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq, seeking an end to five years of international economic sanctions, has disclosed new details about its germ warfare programme, U.N. disarmament envoy Rolf Ekeus said here Sunday.

But Mr. Ekeus, head of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) on Iraq, told reporters at the end of a mission to Baghdad that more work had to be done towards resolving the main obstacle to lifting the sanctions.

Mr. Ekeus described his three days of talks with Iraqi authorities as "positive and constructive."

"The Iraqi government has provided new information with regard to biological weapons. We will assess that information and report about it to the Security Council," the Swedish diplomat said.

"We have agreed to continue intensive work on clarifying these points," he said after meeting General Amer Mohammed Rashid, the newly-appointed oil minister and main negotiator on disarmament.

Mr. Ekeus's six-member team arrived here Friday on a mission to persuade Iraq to account for 17 tonnes of missing biological material imported before the 1991 Gulf war which could be used for

germ warfare.

Mr. Ekeus told the U.N. Security Council two weeks ago after his last trip here in late May that the germ warfare issue was the only main obstacle to lifting the oil embargo.

Mr. Ekeus must certify that all Iraq's biological, chemical, nuclear and ballistic missile weapons programmes have been eliminated before the Security Council will consider easing the ban on Iraqi oil exports imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"We have agreed to continue intensive work on clarifying these additional points," he told reporters.

Mr. Ekeus was to meet Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz before leaving to report his findings to the Security Council.

Mr. Ekeus said in his most recent report that the only serious remaining problems in eliminating weapons of mass destruction were in the biological area.

Mr. Ekeus had spent a year seeking information on the biological research.

Iraq said before he arrived that its cooperation depended on the United Nations declaring investigations into other weapons programmes closed and guaranteeing to lift the ban on oil exports. However, with splits inside

the U.N. Security Council over terms for easing sanctions, Iraq hopes the U.S. determination to keep sanctions will succumb to the more sympathetic view of France, Russia and China.

The United States has linked a lifting of sanctions to Iraqi behaviour in a wide range of areas beyond military programmes, including human rights. It can block an easing of sanctions through its veto in the Security Council, which it has vowed to use if necessary.

Russia and France have suggested linking an easing of the ban on oil exports to Mr. Ekeus reporting that Iraq has complied with all the arms control demands, including biological weapons.

The Security Council, which meets every 60 days to review the sanctions, is due to hold its next session in mid-July.

Mr. Ekeus made no additional comment after the final round of talks with Mr. Aziz. He held talks earlier Sunday with Gen. Rashid for the third time since he arrived here.

Mr. Ekeus was due to take a special U.N. flight to Bahrain, the U.N. field office for weapons inspectors, on his way back to U.N. headquarters in New York.

Bosnian Serbs shell Sarajevo, target U.N.

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Bosnian Serbs targeted United Nations peacekeepers on Sunday, firing three shells at U.N. headquarters in Sarajevo and aiming heavy machinegun fire at a convoy driving along a hazardous mountain road.

Three peacekeepers were slightly wounded by shrapnel when a mortar round exploded in trees next to the U.N. flagpole in the courtyard of the headquarters compound. A local police guard at the U.S. embassy next door was also slightly injured.

The building serves as headquarters for all U.N. peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and is the residence of the U.N. commander in the country, Lieutenant General Rupert Smith.

He is currently on leave but the building was crowded with U.N. military and civilian personnel when the shell struck.

"This is the third day running that shells and rounds have landed close to U.N. Bosnia headquarters," said U.N. spokesman Lieutenant

Colonel Gary Coward, adding that Sunday's shelling was probably a deliberate attack.

Two Associated Press journalists were slightly injured when two more shells landed just outside the U.N. compound some 45 minutes after the first attack.

As shells continued, the city's mayor said a Bosnian army offensive to ease the Serbs' stranglehold siege was exacting a terrible price on casualties but it was his people's only hope.

"We will take the risk of fighting for survival if the other option is surrender and survival," Mayor Tarik Kupusovic told Reuters.

He spoke as the city's morgue gathered the 13 victims of Saturday's fierce Serb shelling which the U.N. condemned as indiscriminate and deliberate targeting of civilians.

While the U.N. said the shelling was random and apparently unconnected to offensive activity by Muslim-led forces, city dwellers were convinced the attacks were revenge for successes by their

army somewhere far from the eyes of U.N. observers.

Mr. Kupusovic rejected the argument that the government had brought unnecessary woes on its people, pointing out that shelling had increased, water and power been cut off and all aid supplies blocked before the offensive began.

European Union envoy Carl Bildt, who met Croatian President Franjo Tudjman on his second tour of former Yugoslavia, said Serbia would have to do more than recognise Bosnia if international sanctions against it were to be lifted.

He said Serbia would have to help "achieve changes" on the ground in Bosnia, and there would have to be freedom of movement for humanitarian aid convoys.

He also said talks between the warring parties in Bosnia are "not imminent."

"The situation is going from bad to worse and that's what we are trying to make very clear to all parties," Mr. Bildt said.

(Continued on page 7)

Egypt warns Tourabi against threatening Nile

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa rebuked Sudan's spiritual patron Hassan Al Tourabi on Sunday for suggesting Sudan's control of the Upper Nile would make Cairo vulnerable in any conflict with Khartoum.

Mr. Tourabi should stay away from matters that are far too big for him. He should not play with fire — and at the same time he should not play with water," Foreign Minister Amr Musa told the press.

Strained relations between the two countries worsened last week over Egyptian suspicions that Sudan was behind the attempt on President Hosni Mubarak's life in Addis Ababa. Two border clashes heightened the tension.

Egypt has ruled out military action against Sudan, referring instead to unspecified alternative responses.

But Mr. Tourabi said on Saturday the Nile waters, which run through Sudan before reaching Egypt, would be a powerful weapon in Sudanese hands in any confrontation.

"We do not want to aggravate national tensions ... but the water supplies come from this country. They (Egypt) have no underground supply of water and if Sudan is provoked to interfere with water agreements this is going to be deadly," he told Reuters in Khartoum (see page 2).

Throughout the week the two countries have exchanged threats and accusations which flared on Tuesday and Wednesday into armed clashes in the disputed border region of Halalib.

Abdul Hadi Radi, Egypt's minister of water resources and public works, said Sudan had no right to cancel unilaterally a 1959 agreement on sharing the river's water between the countries of the Nile basin.

"The wise men of Sudan know well that the accord of 1959 is a line that cannot be crossed," he said.

Mr. Radi, quoted by the official Egyptian news agency MENA, added that Khartoum "cannot reduce by one drop Egypt's share of the Nile's water — that is 55 billion cubic metres of water per year."

"The question of water differs from all other problems because it concerns the life of a people and it is governed by international law. Any Sudanese act in this context will damage Sudan first before it damages Egypt," he added.

The Nile, which rises in Ethiopia and Uganda, passes through Sudan and then Egypt before flowing into the Mediterranean Sea.

Mubarak.

A day after Egypt sought to cool the fierce dispute between the two Arab countries, Sudan promised not to retreat from a fundamentalist programme that has alienated most of its neighbours.

"The Sudanese masses are ready to die in defence of their territorial integrity and will not let any foreign aggression go unanswered," said the English-language newspaper daily Horizon.

Relations between Egypt and Sudan have been strained and at times openly hostile ever since the 1989 coup that brought Sudan's government to power. But the sharp rhetoric and border clashes represent the biggest crisis in their relations in decades.

As late as Saturday, Egyptian officials seemed to be taking a softer line. Mr. Musa ruled out any military action against Sudan and even held out the possibility of a rapprochement between the two neighbours.

Sudan, however, kept up its bitter criticism of what it called Egypt's arrogant policies. On Sunday, hundreds of protesters poured into the streets in front of a government building. Dancers in African dress pounded drums and blew horns.

At another rally, General Bashir, called accusations that Sudan was involved in

Yemen's GPC commits itself to better Arab ties

SANAA (Agencies) — Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh's political party on Sunday called for better ties with Gulf Arab neighbours after the five years of strain mainly over the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

The General Peoples Congress (GPC) called for "raising the level of brotherly ties with the states of the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf on the basis of beneficial, equal cooperation and mutual respect for the regimes, sovereignty and rights."

The call was part of a policy statement by the GPC which was issued at the end of a week-long meeting by its general assembly, the first such gathering since 1988.

Yemen's ties with Gulf Arab neighbours, once its main political and financial backers, were damaged in 1990 when it voted against Security Council resolution sanctioning the use of force against Iraqi troops which had seized Kuwait.

Ties with some Gulf Arab states have improved in recent months and Yemen's standing in the region received a boost last month when Mr. Saleh flew to Saudi Arabia for reconciliation talks after the two sides agreed in February to resolve a long-standing border dispute.

The GPC, the majority partner in a coalition government with the Islamist Islah Party, stressed "the importance of the Iraqi government abiding by the implementation of the decisions of the

international legality (United Nations) relating to the Gulf crisis."

But the statement also called for "the lifting of the siege of brotherly Iraq to end the suffering of the Iraqi people."

President Saleh urged his party to fight tribalism and regionalism threatening Yemen's unity a year after the civil war.

Mr. Saleh closed the GPC congress urging his party to act forcefully against the phenomenon of regionalism and tribalism and fight (the practice of) vendettas in Yemeni society.

Tribes exert more influence over their people than the central government throughout much of Yemen, particularly in the north, and avenge wrongs their own tribesmen suffer at the hands of other tribes.

The northern-based government is also trying to eliminate the divide between north and south after its forces won the May-July civil war last year.

Mr. Saleh repeated "the GPC's commitment to support democratic action, participate actively in political life, and help Yemenis alleviate their suffering."

Mr. Saleh's party has also sought to reorganise in the face of political gains by Al Islah.

The Yemeni president also said his party will remain "open to all those who want to join" and called on members to "mobilise" for the next legislative elections.

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CHECKING ON HEALTH CARE: His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah, the Regent, Sunday meets with Minister of Health Aref Batayneh and other senior officials of the Ministry of Health to discuss health care services and ministry projects, including means of importing medicines and food supplies and rules and regulations governing such imports. Prince Abdullah called for expanding the base of comprehensive health insurance and primary health care services, particularly those related to children. The officials told the Regent that sufficient supplies of basic medicines were readily available in the country (Petra photo)

RJ adds flights amid increased demand

AMMAN (Petra) — In a drive to meet the growing travel needs of the Jordanian community to the U.S. state of Michigan, Royal Jordanian (RJ) has started unscheduled flight services from Amman to Detroit during the summer, according to an RJ statement Sunday.

The service is being run on a trial basis to determine whether regular flights to Detroit would be viable.

RJ currently operates five regular flights to New York and two flights to Chicago, the statement said.

Also to meet demand on U.S.-bound flights, RJ increased its weekly flights to Chicago to three per week until September, according to the statement.

The statement said also that similar unscheduled flights from Amman to Montreal and Toronto and back to Amman have also been introduced for similar reasons of growing demand.

The statement from RJ further said that as of July 1 two direct flights a week from Amman to Alexandria, Egypt will commence.

RJ last year had to schedule additional flights to and from Europe to meet the needs of tourists visiting the Kingdom.

Increased activity in the tourism sector following the signing of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty brought higher demand on the airline, the statement said.

The national air carrier is planning to add on flights between November and December in anticipation of another peak season.

Local BCCI investors to seek compensation through representation by Egyptian bank

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordanian Depositors Protection Association (JDPA) Sunday announced that a group of depositors in the defunct Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) will meet during mid-July in Cairo to appeal to Egyptian courts to allow an Egyptian bank to represent them in official out-of-court negotiations with depositors, liquidators and shareholders and decide further action to reclaim losses suffered in the 1991 BCCI scandal.

"We have decided to employ the Faisal Islamic Bank of Cairo to reclaim our rights, and lead discussions with the relevant parties," said Odeh Machini, head of the JDPA.

"We have noticed that the creditors committee (that is currently handling the negotiations) has become less efficient and less interested, especially in the last three months. We want a representative that will pursue our rights," Mr. Machini said.

The JDPA is part of a committee based in London working to retrieve the loss of nearly \$2 billion in deposits shared by ten Islamic banks, a Luxembourg holding group, a London depositors protection association, and a creditors and depositors group in Egypt.

Jordanian depositors constitute 120 accounts with a loss of about \$100 million, most of which was in foreign currency deposits in the UK, Cyprus and France.

Mr. Machini said the group was also prepared to file a case against BCCI, and had filed twice to Luxembourg courts, believing that individual cases would stand better chances for more equitable settlements.

But legal proceedings in the case are structured in such a way that courts will accept cases only from liquidators.

The depositors group expected a settlement in May, but an appeal from a BCCI employee late in the month said that the court's decision involving the liquidators — rumoured to be 20 per cent compensation — was unfair. That appeal has delayed the decision to date.

"Our case is waiting on a technical point," he said. "Unless it is settled at the liquidity level, we can not file a case. If we have a final decision today, I promise that we would file our case tomorrow," Mr. Machini said.

Mr. Machini was addressing a press conference at the JDPA office in Amman.

"The meaning is to keep all parties involved in this disaster," he said. "It's been four years and there is still no clear announcement issued officially to tell depositors that their rights will be paid in 10 years or that they can expect 10 per cent — we are still floating," Mr. Machini said.

He said the bank has been negligent in compensation although "\$5 billion are available in the box of liquidation: \$1.8 billion as a contribution from the Abu Dhabi government; \$1 billion as a result of settlement with 1st American National Bank in Washington D.C.; \$1 billion from the Ben Mahfouz family; \$1 billion in the accounts cashbox of the bank; and the outcome of litigation and settlements paid by debtors in the amount of \$1 billion."

Ministry gets new secretary general
Amman (Petra) — The Cabinet Saturday appointed Farouq Naghaway as Secretary General of the Ministry of Social Development, succeeding Suleiman Rousan. Meeting under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, the cabinet also approved the secondment of Rafi Shahin, who is currently an advisor at the prime ministry to the Ministry of Information as of July 16.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

- * "Diva" at the French Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.
- * "The Civil War: the cause 1861," at the American Center at 5:00 p.m.

LECTURE

- * "The Fatimid Textiles in the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin," by Mrs. Gisela Helnecke at the National Gallery at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

- * Paintings by Jordanian Artist Muhammad Majali at the Phoenix Gallery of Culture and Art.
- * Works by Iraqi artist Tahjia Al Hakim at Ab'ad Art Gallery.
- * Exhibition demonstrating the development of cinema over the past century at the French Cultural Centre.
- * Ali Jabri, "Selected Works '85/'95" at Darat Al Funun, until July 4.
- * Exhibition of works by Jordanian and Iraqi artists at Orfali Gallery.

Jardaneh says there is no move to reduce customs duties on cars

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government on Sunday sought to put to rest widespread reports of an impending reduction of customs duties, sales tax and other levies on passenger cars. The reports had led to a severe stagnation of the market for cars in the country by dissuading many potential buyers to await lower prices.

A statement issued by Finance Minister Basel Jardaneh after a regular meeting of the Council of Ministers said there was "no move to reduce customs duties on cars as reported by some daily newspapers."

The statement, carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, emphasised that "customs duties, sales tax and other tariffs imposed on cars will remain as they are without any reduction."

Petra said the Council of Ministers discussed "the issue in detail and means to deal with the negative impact of such press reports on car dealers."

That was a reference to complaints by most car dealers that sales had dropped significantly in the last four months amid the on-again-off-again reports in the local press that the Ministry of Finance was poised to announce a reduction in customs duties.

Also being circulated were reports that a proposal was adopted by the Ministry of Finance to offer total/partial customs tax exemptions to cars to be used as taxis but as a replacement for existing vehicles in the country.

The government offered a customs reduction on cars in late 1994, when it cut an average of 27 to 45 per cent in slab-type structure of customs duties on cars based on engine capacity.

Since then, there have been numerous reports that a "second reduction" was coming soon.

Supporting such an argument in the reports was a suggestion that Jordan was duty-bound to cut tariffs on cars if it were to join the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), an international accord that calls for the removal of most protective measures and trade barriers.

But, officials and economists familiar with Jordan's bid to enter GATT and its successor, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), point out that the Kingdom is in the very early stages of application for admission and that it was not hard-pressed to adopt any measure as part of its accession.

The first draft of a general Jordanian document — that sets out the features of the Kingdom's economy and trade practices — was sent to GATT last year to a committee headed by Singapore which is negotiating the Kingdom's entry to the world body.

The draft was returned after a first reading and a second draft has only recently been finalised.

"Even if we assume that reducing customs duties on cars is an obligation that Jordan has to undertake as a condition to entering GATT or WTO, the fact remains that Jordan is at least one year away from accession to either," noted a source who keeps a close tab on the issue.

"Again, reduction of customs duties on cars or any other tariff on any item as part of GATT membership depends on negotiations that the concerned country conducts with the concerned panel in GATT," said the source. "It is really up to Jordanian negotiators when they sit down with the GATT negotiating committee to secure most favourable terms."

At the same time, there has to be some reduction in customs duties on most items, including cars, as and when Jordan's entry to GATT is finalised. Again, Jordan, like other fresh entrants to GATT and WTO, will have room to seek a grace period before implementing the reduction.

"In light of all these provisions, it is naive to assume that Jordan is going to reduce customs duties on cars simply in the context of its entry to GATT or WTO," said the source. "There may or may not be other reasons but they have nothing to do with GATT and WTO."

The U.S. government has been pressing Jordan to adopt a uniform level of customs duties on automobiles — by restructuring the tariff system to be based on the cost rather than the engine size of the automobiles.

Such a structure, according to American arguments, will make U.S.-made vehicles, which usually have a large engine size, more competitive with their lighter Japanese counterparts.

New curriculum streams to start in 95/96 scholastic year

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Two new subjects, sharia (Islamic law) and home economics are to be included in the curriculum of secondary schools starting in the 1995/1996 scholastic year, Ministry of Education sources said Sunday.

Talal Zougby, director of Curriculum and Text Books Department at the ministry told the Jordan Times that the two new subjects will be run as educational streams, bringing the total number of streams to nine.

The seven existing curricula or educational streams are in the arts, sciences, commerce, agriculture, industry, nursing and hotel management.

"We noticed a demand among students to specialise in certain areas that are not included in other streams," Dr. Zougby said.

According to Dr. Zougby, sharia is currently being taught at a variety of institutes "so we decided to open a separate specialised stream in Islamic education for students who want to study Islamic law."

The sharia stream, like other streams, is to include, within its own programme of study, the four required subjects of Arabic language, English language, Islamic religion and mathematics, Dr. Zougby said.

According to Dr. Zougby, there was an increase in demand for a specialised vocational training stream which he said was the catalyst for the introduction of the home economics stream.

According to Dr. Zougby, the preliminary phase of the home economics course will include cosmetology, tailoring, early childhood education, and handicrafts.

The introduction of new streams comes in line with several recent changes made by the ministry.

The latest was the introduction by the education council of two new subjects, population studies and traffic education, into all educational streams.

Dr. Zougby also said that the ministry recently completed a study of the 10th grade curriculum and had collected all reference on the subject of women for compilation in a new booklet.

"We were asked by Queen Alia Fund for Social Development to conduct a study of all textual references to women," Dr. Zougby said. The newly compiled booklet is to be used in the 1995 U.N. Conference on Women in Beijing, he added.

Dr. Zougby said that the ministry's decision to amend its textbooks comes in response to the 1987 National Conference on Education recommendations which aimed at laying new grounds for a developed national policy through wide scale reforms and the call for the adoption of an "execution mechanism" that will guarantee realisation of the resolutions through a predetermined financial, technical and chronological working plan.

Minister visits Maan governorate to inspect preparations for municipal elections

MAAN (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Nader Thuheirat Sunday visited Maan Governorate and met with the heads of committees in charge of supervising the municipal elections in Maan and Aqaba governorates.

In reviewing the general arrangements for the elections and the voting centres, the minister expressed appreciation of the committees' work and urged them to take every possible precaution to ensure that the elections run smoothly and according to plan.

Mr. Thuheirat requested that an operations room be opened to help coordinate the committees' work which involves verifying the identity of the voters before they cast their ballots and dealing with any unexpected development.

Municipal elections are to be held in all governorates on Tuesday, July 11.

The election day has been declared a public holiday so that registered voters will be free to go to the polls and exercise their right to vote.

Meanwhile in Salt it was announced Sunday that all arrangements for the July 11



Nader Thuheirat
municipal elections have been finalised.

Cabinet approves phase 2 of community medicine specialisation programme

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet has approved the second phase of a programme for doctors to obtain a degree in community medicine by the Arab Medical Specialisations Board, Minister of Health Aref Batayneh announced Sunday.

He said that this degree enables its holder to acquire the highest medical specialisation certificate in the Arab World in this field.

In view of the importance of this specialisation, the Ministry of Health created a programme to award a diploma in community medicine (the first phase) in 1991, said the minister adding that the programme was prepared in cooperation with

the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Jordanian universities.

He said that 53 Jordanian physicians have already taken this programme for which a year-long academic study is required.

The ministry has recommended to the cabinet that the second phase of the programme, which takes two years to complete, be approved, said Dr. Batayneh who noted that the ministry will start the second phase soon.

According to the ministry, community medicine is vital for the country as it contributes towards better organising comprehensive medical service and helps to

promote and improve the health system.

The community medicine programme aims at defining and analysing existing and expected health problems in the community, taking into account demographic, geographic, economic and social considerations.

It is intended also to help in planning and managing primary health care services and involves coordination between health sectors operating in the country.

In short, said the ministry, community medicine helps to adapt health systems to cater to the actual health care needs of the community and enhance health services and their effectiveness.

Japanese ambassador ends tour of duty in Kingdom

A highlight of tenure was the raising of bilateral ties to unprecedented levels -- Ikeda

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Most diplomats who served in Jordan since September 1991, when the Arab-Israeli peace process was launched, were witnesses to history being made in the region with the breakthroughs in the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Jordanian tracks. But for someone like Japanese Ambassador Yuji Ikeda the years also represented a major achievement — raising bilateral ties to an unprecedented level.

Mr. Ikeda, who took up his post two and a half years ago and is returning to the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo this week, notes that he saw a very high level of exchange of visits between the two countries and the first "Jordan Week" in Japan — "the culmination of efforts to boost bilateral relations."

Jordanian visitors to Japan included Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath, Princess Basma, Prince Abdullah and Princess Haya.

On the other side, Their Imperial Highnesses Crown

Prince Naruhito and Princess Masako became the first members of the Japanese royal family to visit Jordan since 1976 after the then crown prince and now Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko came to the Kingdom.

On the diplomatic level, then Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali visited Japan in late 1993, and the Japanese foreign minister was in Amman in May 1994.

These were all building stones in furthering the traditionally strong Japanese-Jordanian relations, Mr. Ikeda noted in a pre-departure interview with the Jordan Times.

On the political front, Japan has advanced its quest to move away from the role of a traditional banker and assume a political role in the Middle East with high-profile activities in the multilateral phase of the Middle East peace process, said Mr. Ikeda. "That is the most important development" that he was a party to while in Jordan, he said, noting that Japan chairs the multilateral working group

on the environment.

In general, "I'm very pleased that I was a witness to the very important and historic events that the region saw in the last two and a half years," Ambassador Ikeda said.

"We saw Jordan taking a very courageous initiative to make peace and play a strong role in the overall peacemaking process in the region," added Mr. Ikeda, in a reference to the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty signed in October.

"There is wide international consensus on the role that Jordan plays in the region and the need to help the Kingdom," he said. As a result, it is only natural that many countries, including Japan, are ready to extend aid to Jordan, "but it is a matter of the individual policies and approaches of the countries concerned on how this willingness is translated into action."

The visit of Crown Prince Hassan to Japan in May and the "Jordan Week" held there have led to a new era in relations in that Tokyo was able to better understand

Jordan, he said.

That understanding was further cemented by the recent visit of a senior Japanese delegation to Amman, he said.

"They had a very clear and frank exchange of views with Jordanian officials," including the Crown Prince, said the ambassador, who was honoured by His Majesty King Hussein as well as the Jordan-Japan Friendship Association for his contribution and services to developing bilateral relations.

The delegation has taken back "very clear ideas on Jordan" and now it is a matter of formulating the right measure and approach to help the Kingdom, said the ambassador, who has served in Geneva, Washington D.C., Canada and Hong Kong after joining the Japanese foreign service in 1962 at the age of 24.

Another point of personal pride for Mr. Ikeda while in Jordan was that it was during this period that his only son graduated from a U.S. law school and is now practising law in New York.

Ambassador Ikeda said the Tokyo government highly appreciated Jordan's contribution to peacemaking and noted that Amman started receiving Japanese grant aid since 1993 after the decline in the per capita income of the Kingdom qualified it to receive such assistance under parameters adopted by Tokyo.

Amman received nearly \$40 million in grant aid in the last two years, and the amount for 1995 is still under discussion.

Japan, which holds about \$1.8 billion of Jordan's foreign debts, is bound by policy not to offer debt cancellation to any country and continue to extend loans to the same country, Mr. Ikeda noted.

As such, the focus now is on how to come up with a formula that would allow the Tokyo government to extend aid to Jordan without stepping away from "the framework of its various policy measures," said the ambassador, who leaves Jordan on Tuesday.

A successor to Mr. Ikeda is expected here in about one



Yuji Ikeda
month.

Mr. Ikeda said he had high respect for the industriousness of Jordanians. "Jordanians have been trying to develop their human potential and resources to make up for the shortfall in natural resources...this is a very commendable effort," the envoy said.

"I hope they will continue their efforts," he said. "Japan stands ready to help in whatever manner it can."

Sri Lankan army to probe slaughter of 110 soldiers

COLOMBO (Agencies) — The Sri Lankan army Sunday began an investigation into an attack by separatist Tamil Tiger guerrillas who killed at least 110 soldiers at their northern Mandaitivu base last week, a military spokesman said Sunday.

A three-member team headed by a major-general was appointed to investigate Wednesday's attack carried out by a large group of guerrillas from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), spokesman Sarath Munasinghe said.

"It is a routine court of inquiry which will look into the circumstances of the case and account for the weapons in the camp as well as order compensation to the victims," Mr. Munasinghe said.

The LTTE pulverised the camp despite the army being alerted by intelligence authorities 24 hours in advance about the impending assault on Mandaitivu, a small islet just two kilometres (1.25 miles) away from the LTTE's stronghold of Jaffna.

The military claimed killing 50 rebels in a counter-offensive but the LTTE has admitted losing only eight of their own fighters, including two women.

Sri Lankan newspapers

criticised the nation's military Sunday for its failure to repulse the rebel attack.

In an editorial headlined "all at sea", the Sunday Times said the jungle-scrub island of Mandaitivu, had been allowed to become a "virtual sitting duck," defended only by a newly formed unit of volunteers.

A thousand "sea Tigers" stormed the island in the early hours of Wednesday, making off with almost the entire armoury, including heavy artillery pieces. The rebels lost more than 50 of their own men, the army says.

"The (rebel) task was all the more difficult because the garrison was virtually surrounded by sea," the Sunday Times said. "But some of the sentries were apparently sleeping and the searchlights were off with only a captain in charge of the whole camp."

The head of army military intelligence has been dismissed despite tipping off the brass about the planned attack by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, sources said Sunday.

"Since the collapse of the peace talks, Sri Lankan security forces have been suffering disaster after disaster

at the hands of the LTTE," the Sunday Island newspaper said.

"Newspapermen are not military strategists but it has to be pointed out that even an elementary schoolboy would say that something is seriously amiss with the military command in the north," it said.

The LTTE broke off a ceasefire on April 19 and have since stepped up attacks, downing two air force transport planes, killing 42 civilians in the east and now killing more than 100 servicemen at Mandaitivu.

The Tigers are fighting for a separate homeland in the north and east in a war in which more than 50,000 people have died since 1983.

The Island newspaper said the army knew two days in advance that Mandaitivu was going to be attacked.

"Yet when the attack came, only 350 of the 700 soldiers of the 10th Gemunu Watch Battalion solely responsible for the defence of Mandaitivu were on the island," it said.

The next day, it said, were either on leave or at a nearby air base preparing to return from leave. Nor was there any air cover until the fighting was over, it added.

It was the heaviest casualty toll suffered by government forces since the Tigers stormed the Poonaryn army camp, south of Jaffna lagoon, in November, 1993.

The army, which Wednesday described the Tiger attack as a "well-planned, well-thought out" operation, denies it was caught napping.

"We had intelligence that the LTTE were considering an attack," military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel S. Handapangoda said Thursday. "We were not surprised. We were ready to fight. That's why there were so many casualties."

Meanwhile a human rights group said Sunday Tamil Tiger rebels use children as combatants.

The University Teachers for Human Rights (UTHR), a rights group comprised of Tamil academics who have fled the Tiger-ruled north-eastern Jaffna province for fear of LTTE attacks, said in its latest report that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam or Tamil Tigers was recruiting child soldiers to fight its separatist war.

"The children are growing up in a militarised environment, having constantly faced bombing and shelling.



Prince Pavlos, heir to the Greek throne in exile, and his bride Mary-Chantal Miller, daughter of American-born businessman Robert W. Miller, wave after their wedding ceremony at the Greek Orthodox St. Sophia Cathedral in London (AFP photo)

Greek prince's wedding noted mostly for lawmakers' attendance

ATHENS (AP) — There was little public reaction in Greece to the wedding of former Crown Prince Pavlos, the heir to a throne that was abolished by referendum 21 years ago.

Much of the debate around the wedding has focused on the attendance of 10 members of the conservative New Democracy Party who accepted ex-King Constantine's invitation. Socialist Premier Andreas Papandreu said last month that any deputies who attended the wedding should resign.

The Socialist Party's general secretary, Akis Tsochopoulos, echoed his leader Saturday, attacking the conservative deputies by implying that they were trying to question the parliamentary system.

"They are chameleons of the democratic system," he said.

"There is a great need for all Greeks to defend the constitutional system of the country and not allow any doubts against it. These gentlemen have a lot to answer for."

Alexandros Papagorgonas, a former conservative cabinet minister, said before leaving for London: "No one tells me what to do."

Headlines Saturday were

mutated, with the respected, liberal daily Eleftherotypia being the only major newspaper to comment on the issue on its front page.

"The 10 New Democracy deputies are pitiful caricatures in a well-produced festa. But they provoke democratic sensibilities with their presence at the wedding," it said.

The monarchy was established in 1863 and after a turbulent history was abolished in 1974 in a referendum conducted by the New Democracy Party. About a third of those who voted were in favour of maintaining the monarchy. Its support is believed to be minimal today.

Greece has a parliamentary system, with a figurehead president who is elected by the 300-member unicameral chamber.

There were so many royal guests at the wedding that kings and queens from all over Europe rode on buses to see the exiled crown prince of Greece marry the daughter of an American-born millionaire.

In the ornate Byzantine splendor of St. Sophia Cathedral, Crown Prince Pavlos and Marie-Chantal Miller were married Saturday by a Greek Orthodox patriarch, an archbishop and several bishops before the biggest gathering of royals since Queen Elizabeth II married Prince Philip in 1947.

The hour-long service was broadcast live in Greece. Greeks who support the current republic are angry that the wedding is rekindling debate about the monarchy.

Royalty from around the world turned out to support the Greek monarchy, a tribute to the prince's father, ex-King Constantine, who has lived in London since a military coup in 1967, and is a favourite in international royal circles.

For many royal observers, it was reminiscent of the late 19th century marriages between European nobles short on money and American heiresses. These included Consuelo Vanderbilt who married the Duke of Marlborough in 1895, the same year department store heiress Mary Leiter married Lord Curzon.

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Japan subway mystery fumes injure 27

TOKYO (R) — At least 27 people were made ill by mysterious fumes at a subway station in the Japanese port city of Yokohama Sunday, creating new poison-gas concerns for Japan.

The 27 were taken to hospital from the Kamioka Station in Yokohama, 30 kilometres west of Tokyo, after they were exposed to the fumes at about 3 p.m. (0600 GMT), a spokesman for the Yokohama Fire Department told Reuters.

All were complaining of sore throats and pain in their eyes but were "not in a serious condition," the spokesman said. No cause had been identified, he added.

"We do not expect the number of people affected by the fumes to increase," he said.

Police were investigating, a police spokesman told Reuters, adding that no suspicious objects or materials had been found.

"This is a very deplorable incident. We are worried about a chain reaction by copy cats," the police spokesman said. "We will do whatever we can to prevent them."

He refused to speculate on whether the latest incident was linked to the doomsday cult accused of involvement in the March 20 sarin nerve-

gas attack on Tokyo subway that killed 11 people and made 5,500 ill.

"At present, we can't say whether Aum Shinri Kyo (Supreme Truth Sect) was responsible for the incident," the police spokesman said.

An Aum spokeswoman refused to comment on Sunday's incident.

"I am not in a position to say anything," she told Reuters.

Cult leader Shoko Asahara and several top followers face murder and attempted-murder charges in connection with the Tokyo subway attack.

He spoke of "praise and admiration" for martyrs of all Christian confessions after a service to confer sainthood on three Catholic priests tortured to death by Calvinist forces had alienated the minority Slovak Evangelical Churches.

Addressing the open-air mass in the eastern city of Kosice, where the three priests were killed in 1619 during the Thirty Years War, the Pope told a huge crowd that Slovak Christians of various confessions had paid for their faith with their lives.

He made special mention of 24 Calvinist pastors executed in the Slovak town of Presov in 1687 by Catholic Habsburg forces, saying that the Roman Catholic Church could not fail to acknowledge their "spiritual greatness."

"To them and to all who accepted suffering and death out of fidelity to the dictates of their conscience the church gives praise and expresses admiration," the Pope said.

He was due to visit a monument to the 24 martyrs in Presov later Sunday in an unscheduled late addition to his four-day visit to strongly Catholic Slovakia.

The stop, on the way to a meeting with Eastern rite Catholics in Presov, was announced Saturday after several thousand Protestants had gathered there to honour the 24.

Fire fighting teams were still battling the blaze at Gencor Ltd's St. Helena Mine near the free state town of Welkom and production at the shaft was at a standstill, they said.

Four of the miners died after running back through thick smoke to warn colleagues further down an incline at the pit's number two shaft. The men, and the two men they tried to save, were overcome as they tried to get back above the smoke wall.

"The heroism and the selflessness of the... miners who ran back through the smoke to warn their fellow workers serves as an inspiring example to us all," Mineral and

Energy Affairs Minister P. Botha said in a statement.

Andrew Davidson, spokesman for Gencon's mining division Goldfield, told Reuters the fire broke out in a disused store between 25 and 24 level, about 1,600 metres (5,250 feet) underground at the mine 250 kilometres southwest of Johannesburg.

Mr. Davidson said four fire fighting teams were trying to seal off the blaze site in the shaft, which produced high-grade ore.

Pope honours Protestants killed by Catholics

KOSICE, Slovakia (R) — Pope John Paul paid tribute to Protestants killed by Catholics in the 17th century Sunday as he made amends for perceived religious insensitivity during his visit to Slovakia.

He spoke of "praise and admiration" for martyrs of all Christian confessions after a service to confer sainthood on three Catholic priests tortured to death by Calvinist forces had alienated the minority Slovak Evangelical Churches.

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"This is the one day of the year we let our patriotism show," said Mr. Chretien, referring to his compatriots' tendency toward modesty about their nation.

"Don't let that fool you," he said. "We know who we are. We know that Canada is the best country in the world.... vive le Canada."

Separatist leaders also have placed ads in the

Mandela arrives in Tokyo for 5-day visit

TOKYO (R) — South African President Nelson Mandela arrived in Tokyo Sunday for an official five-day visit to meet Japanese government and business leaders.

Japanese officials described Mr. Mandela's visit as a "symbolic event" to mark a new era of bilateral relations.

Mr. Mandela was expected to win renewed assurances of economic and political support from Tokyo, Japanese officials said.

Besides formal state functions, Mr. Mandela, on his

third trip to Japan since 1990, will attend lunches hosted by business leaders in Tokyo. He will visit South Korea for three days after leaving Japan Thursday.

Mr. Mandela was being accompanied by Trade and Industry Minister Trevor Manuel and Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo. He is scheduled to meet Japanese leaders including Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama and Emperor Akihito.

Diplomatic sources in Johannesburg said Mr. Man-

dela was disappointed during his 1991 visit at Tokyo's refusal to provide funds to his African National Congress party because it said it aided governments not political parties.

"The visits will serve to strengthen all-round relations between South Africa and these two east Asian countries, with particular focus on the expansion of mutually beneficial trade and investment links. Development aid will also feature in the talks," Mr. Mandela's office said in a statement Saturday.

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Montreal subway system and have set up a toll-free telephone line that provides reassuring pre-recorded answers to questions about separatism.

Federalist supporters countered this week with newspaper ads attacking separatist referendum manoeuvring.

4 S. Africa miners die in failed rescue bid

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Four miners killed by a fire about a mile (1.6 km) beneath the surface of a South African gold mine died in a failed bid to rescue two colleagues trapped behind a curtain of smoke, officials said Sunday.

Fire fighting teams were still battling the blaze at Gencon Ltd's St. Helena Mine near the free state town of Welkom and production at the shaft was at a standstill, they said.

Four of the miners died after running back through thick smoke to warn colleagues further down an incline at the pit's number two shaft. The men, and the two men they tried to save, were overcome as they tried to get back above the smoke wall.

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The question remains the same: Do you want to separate from Canada?" the ad said. "And the answer remains the same. No to separation."

In Ottawa, red-coated mounted police and soldiers in bearskin hats joined in bilingual ceremonies outside parliament, opened with a 21-gun salute.

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Grant, Hurley home together, 'but not happy'

LONDON (AFP) — The reunion of actor Hugh Grant and his longtime girlfriend Liz Hurley in their country house near Bath in south-western England did not go well, the actress' mother said. Grant, the star of Four Weddings And A Funeral, was in Hollywood promoting his new movie when he was arrested Tuesday allegedly for engaging in sex with a prostitute in his white BMW. Angela Hurley told reporters that her daughter was "feeling down." "Liz rang me last night and she was not in particularly good spirits," the mother said. "Yesterday was a very difficult day, and things are certainly not easy. Liz told me her house was under siege at the moment." Hurley left the home alone Saturday.

Japanese live longer and longer

TOKYO (AFP) — Japanese men and women, who have the world's longest life expectancy, extended it further last year, according to a government report released Sunday. A typical Japanese woman now lives 82.98 years, up nearly six months on the 1994 report. The average male lives 78.57 years, four months longer than the last time the Health and Welfare Ministry released its research. According to the ministry, Japanese women have had the world's longest life expectancy for the past nine years and men for the past eight years. French women held the second longest life span of 80.94 years, while Icelandic men came second to their Japanese counterparts, living an average 75.74 years, the ministry report said.

Tabloid: 'Divine Brown' did not recognise Grant

LONDON (AP) — Prostitute Stella Marie Thompson said she didn't know Hugh Grant was a movie star until after they were arrested together in Los Angeles, a British newspaper said Sunday. The News of the World quoted the 25-year-old prostitute as saying Grant paid her \$60 for oral sex in his car. "I told him that for \$40 more we could've gone to a room — and never have been caught," but he said he had only \$60 with him, the tabloid quoted her as saying. Grant and Ms. Thompson, who uses the name Divine Brown and was convicted twice of prostitution in 1993, were arrested Tuesday and charged with public lewdness. Grant issued no immediate response to Ms. Thompson's interview. He has made no statement since his initial expression of regret over an "insane" action, and has been talking with his girlfriend Liz Hurley at their rented country house in western England. "The guy had a baseball cap pulled down over his eyes. It looked like he was trying to hide his face," Ms. Thompson was quoted as saying. "He said 'wow, your lips are fabulous,' said his name was Lewis and told me 'I looked gorgeous. I said 'I love you.' I am 'Ms. Thompson reportedly said whether it was his fantasy to have sex with a black woman. "He said 'yes, that's my fantasy. And I said 'well, honey, you just got it.' When she told him her name was Divine, he is said to have replied: 'U' you certainly are."

The prostitute kidded him by pretending to be a vice squad police officer, and reached into her purse for an ID card, the newspaper said.

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Business

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A review of economic from the Arab

Tour reven to rise by 50%

Jordan's tourism sector is expected to grow by 50 per cent in the next five years, says a report by the Jordanian Tourism Board.

PRIME MINISTER

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Thousands of demonstrators march in the streets of Paris to protest the resumption of French nuclear testing in the South Pacific. The move was paralleled on the other side of the world, as thousands demonstrated in Noumea, capital of the Pacific island of New Caledonia (AFP photo)

Australia to launch anti-nuke campaign in France

CANBERRA (Agencies) — An Australian advertising agency said Sunday it planned an emotive campaign in France to protest against Paris' decision to resume nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

Saatchi and Saatchi Australia said it hoped its advertisements could run in French newspapers next week.

"We have produced three advertisements, one of which depicts a World War II bomb, to remind the French people that Australians lost and risked their lives in that country to protect them from bombs such as this," said chief executive David Birrell.

"We are hoping to receive corporate and government support to be able to mount an effective campaign, targeting the French people," Mr. Birrell said in a statement.

The Australian public reacted angrily to French President Jacques Chirac's decision last month to carry out eight more underground tests at the Mururoa Atoll test site in French Polynesia.

France's consulate in Perth, western Australia was firebombed.

The Australian govern-

ment, which condemned the decision, has also frozen defence ties with France and cancelled most military ship and aircraft visits until the testing finishes next May.

The government also said it would discuss with others in the South Pacific the possibility of a joint regional publicity campaign in France.

Five thousand people marched in Paris to protest France's planned resumption of nuclear testing, hoping that this year's 50th anniversary of the atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima will galvanise further support for a global test ban.

Another 3,000 protested in New Caledonia, the French territory in the South Pacific.

Under a searing sun, the protesters in Paris marched along main streets on the right bank, carrying banners against the tests and shouting slogans, but maintaining order.

Mr. Chirac's announcement has prompted protests from anti-nuclear and environmental groups, as well as foreign governments, in particular New Zealand and Australia.

Other, smaller rallies were held in Mulhouse, eastern France, in Bordeaux and in the southern town of Belley, of which Defence Minister Charles Millon is mayor.

In Paris, marchers from the environmental group Greenpeace joined politicians representing ecology, the Socialist and Communist parties.

"We think that to be the best in the world, we have to show the rest of the world that we are a nuclear power. I think it's really stupid," demonstrator David Boisseau told Associated Press Television.

"You don't test nuclear war," read a banner held up by the Union of Communist Students. "We are all Poly-nesian," read another.

"We'll be able to make Chirac backtrack," said Alain Krivine, a Trotskyist leader of the far left, adding that the anti-nuclear movement would gain momentum after summer vacation.

Meanwhile, environmentalists in French Polynesia Sunday prepared to take part in a fresh round of demonstrations in the capital, Papeete, to protest France's decision.

The "symbolic action" would mark the 29th anniversary of the first French atmospheric test in the Pacific on July 2, 1966, and would come after demonstrators blocked roads into Papeete the third day running Saturday.

A "peace fleet" made up of various Tahitian anti-nuclear and pro-independence groups have said they will pursue their protest against the French decision until territorial government leader Gaston Flosse — a longtime friend of Mr. Chirac — replies to their demand for a referendum on the new tests.

Only pedestrians and emergency service vehicles have been allowed past barricades at the main eastern and western entrances to Papeete.

Petrol stations in Papeete are starting to run out of fuel and supermarket stocks are also running low. Tourists arriving at Faaa Airport are taken into the town by sea ferry.

French Polynesia officials have admitted surprise at the extent of the protests, but said there was no way a referendum could be held in the territory.

Hopes fade for many missing in Seoul store collapse

SEOUL (AFP) — Hopes that were already fading for hundreds missing in the rubble of a collapsed shopping centre in Seoul, South Korea, receded further Sunday as the sole survivor rescued during the day died in hospital soon after being brought out.

Rescuers braved warnings of a new collapse to save 21-year-old woman shop assistant Lee Un-Yong who had lain crushed and pinned under a concrete beam.

Thousand watched live television coverage of the delicate five-hour operation to ease her out the debris of a basement supermarket and then grieved at the news of her death some two hours later.

Six bodies were found Sunday in the wreckage of the Sampoong Department Store as rescuers searched among rubble despite falls of masonry and fears of noxious fumes.

Earlier in the day, relatives of the missing, furious about a four-hour break in rescue efforts for safety checks, fought with police guarding the site.

"If you are scared, let us go in to rescue our families," shouted a young protester who tried to kick his way through a police cordon.

The rescue of the young woman was the first since a group of 24 elderly store cleaners were brought out alive Saturday evening. They had been entombed for 52 hours in a basement locker room, and were reported to have stayed alive by drinking their own urine.

In a nearby gymnasium Sunday, about 1,000 relatives put up wall posters with names and pictures of their missing families. Some camped there, sleeping on the floor and others watched television news.

"Searching for my wife," read one poster. "Two brothers, 24 and 27" read another. Scores of them showed photos of young smiling shop girls.

Rescue work was repeatedly interrupted by fumes from smouldering underground fires and the risk of a new collapse in the ruins.

Yonhap Television news said several rescuers were slightly injured in a first attempt to rescue the young woman when an overhead concrete slab fell on them.

As rain fell at dusk, television reports put the number of missing at 340 and said it was feared the final death toll could nudge 400.

Officials declined to confirm the reports, saying that 103 were confirmed dead and more than 900 injured. A final estimate of the total of victims was still not available.

A French national and a Taiwanese are among the missing, and a Japanese businessman and five Canadians of ethnic Korean origin were wounded, diplomats and news agencies said. Officials did not list their names.

Among those killed in the collapse, in a posh southern suburb of Seoul, were wives of chief executives of at least six South Korean business conglomerates.

On Sunday, prosecutors questioned a dozen government officials after arresting four people, including Sampoong owner, Lee Jun, and his son and store manager, on charges of manslaughter and negligence.

The son, Lee Han-Jo, reportedly fled the building shortly after receiving a warning that it could collapse and ordering the staff to "carry on as normal."

The Yonhap News Agency said the officials being questioned had reported no problem with the Sampoong store in a safety check conducted just two weeks before its collapse.

It was built in 1989 on a trash landfill on Seoul's affluent south side.



Rescue workers carry a woman, one of 24 cleaners who miraculously survived the collapse of Seoul's Sampoong Department Store entombed in a basement staff changing room for 52 hours. The 24, their bodies greased with oil, were slid through a tiny hole, their eyes bandaged against the unaccustomed light, to safety (AFP photo)

Major confident of win; opponent fights on

LONDON (R) — British Prime Minister John Major showed growing confidence Sunday that he will win an election for leadership of his Conservative Party, and promised to unite its members behind him to fight for a new term in office.

But his challenger, former cabinet minister John Redwood, said the fight was not over, although an opinion poll showed Mr. Major's support was rising among Conservative members of parliament who will choose the party leader Tuesday.

"It is still a very open competition," Mr. Redwood told interviewer David Frost on BBC Television.

Despite Mr. Major's optimism, newspapers warned that he must win convincingly to avoid a knock on the door by the so-called "men in grey suits" — the Conservatives' powerful back-room grandees — asking him to step down in the interests of the party.

The Observer, under the front-page headline "Major stares defeat in the face," said a swing of 25 MPs for or against him could decide his fate.

"It is possible that Mr. Major can win a majority but lose his leadership because he does not score the ringing vote of confidence that has to be required by a prime minister," the newspaper said.

When former Premier Margaret Thatcher failed to win outright in a leadership ballot in 1990, her ministers and the party grandees persuaded her to stand down, opening the way for Mr. Major.

Newspapers said Mr. Major was planning a snap cabinet reshuffle the day after the contest, to pre-empt a similar scenario.

Mr. Major called the ballot for party leadership 10 days ago to end bitter party infighting about his policy towards the European Union but remained as prime minister on a knife-edge.

The 230 vote barrier is increasingly seen by MPs and commentators as the key psychological test of support for Mr. Major, even though under the leadership contest's rules he only needs the support of 165 MPs and a 50-vote margin over Mr. Redwood to win.

Although only Mr. Redwood has declared his challenge, heavyweight cabinet contenders like Trade Secretary Michael Heseltine and right-wing Employment Secretary Michael Portillo are waiting in the wings.

They are expected to slug it out for the leadership if Tuesday's vote is inconclusive and the contest has to go to a second round.

Mr. Major, who would hand over the premiership only if he lost the ruling party's leadership, told Mr. Frost: "I think it will be very satisfying for the Conservative Party to sort this thing out clearly, decisively on Tuesday."

In a veiled warning that failing to back him could end the Conservatives' 16-year grip on power, Mr. Major said: "At its best, it (the Conservative Party) is the most formidable political fighting force in Western Europe...."

"Let's put those internal disagreements and squabbles to one side. In front of us is a general election."

The Conservatives do not need to call a general election until May 1997.

But speculation has been growing that right-wingers who want a tougher line against further European integration could fatally split the party and force an early general election. It looks likely that this would hand power to the opposition Labour Party which is 30 points ahead in opinion polls.



British Premier John Major, who late last month resigned as Conservative Party leader, don (AFP photo) smiles as he emerges with his wife Norma from

Pakistani troops, Karachi militants clash

KARACHI (AFP) — Pakistani paramilitary troops faced stiff armed resistance Sunday when they moved in to arrest militants of the ethnic Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM).

Witnesses said at least one soldier and one policeman were killed in pitched battles which turned the western Orangi district into a war zone.

MQM casualties were not immediately known and a paramilitary officer said the militants might have removed their dead and injured before pulling back.

The sound of heavy automatic gunfire echoed continuously after the security forces cordoned off Orangi to arrest assailants who Saturday attacked an armoured personnel carrier (APC), injuring an officer and two of his men.

Before the operation, mobile telephone companies operating in Karachi were asked to switch off their systems to deny militants communications facilities, an official said.

At least 1,000 troops and police were taking part in the operation and between 70 and 100 militants were believed to be fighting under a dozen leaders, security officials said.

The officials said the militants belonged to MQM, which represents Urdu-speaking migrants who came to Pakistan from India after the partition of the sub-continent in 1947.

MQM is blamed by the government for much of the prolonged violence that has claimed nearly 900 lives, including 100 troops and policemen, this year. Some 350 people died last month.

The party accuses the government of curbing political and social rights of Urdu-speakers.

In Orangi, the militants had put up barricades made of furniture dragged out from houses and with wreckage of burned vehicles.

They also blocked the streets with concrete-filled drums and large concrete water pipes, besides digging trenches up to six feet (1.83 metres) deep and erecting makeshift bunkers.

A paramilitary officer said all exits from the area were sealed before launching the operation which "will continue until we get them."

"Normally, terrorists surrender when they are surrounded. But they are standing ground. It's a pitched battle even though we have pushed them back," another official said.

Officials said the forces had taken at least one militant, seizing a machine-gun and a rocket-propelled grenade launcher.

The security forces were also making house-to-house searches.

The actual area besieged by the forces was roughly one square kilometre, but troops also fanned out up to six kilometres (four miles) around it.

Orangi has a population of about 600,000. Officials said many people had fled their homes because of fighting in the area over the past few days.

The Orangi operation appears to be the first phase of a wider cleanup drive as the government has vowed to crush what it calls an insurgency by MQM with support from India to destabilise Pakistan.

The party denies the allegation and says it is struggling against large scale victimisation and "genocide" of the Urdu-speaking community by the government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Opposition seen ahead in Thai poll projections

BANGKOK (R) — Projections based on vote counts compiled by television stations showed the main opposition Chart Thai (Thai Nation) Party winning the most parliamentary seats in Sunday's general election in Thailand.

The projections based on information from vote-counting centres across the country showed Chart Thai, led by Banharn Silpa-Archa, likely to win over 90 seats in a close race with Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai's Democrat Party.

The Democrats were projected to finish second with slightly fewer than 90 seats in the 391-seat House of Representatives.

The leader of the largest party traditionally becomes prime minister and forms a coalition government with other parties.

Parties coming third and fourth, respectively, were the Chart Pattana (National Development) Party and New Aspiration Party, which are projected to win more than 50 seats each.

The Bangkok-based Palang Dharma Party led by telecommunications tycoon turned politician Thaksin Shinawatra, who was contesting his first election, was projected to come fifth with more than 20 seats.

Mr. Chuan dissolved parliament in May after a land reform scandal surrounding the Democrats led to the break-up of his five-party coalition.

Fleeing Hutus urged to return to Bujumbura

BUJUMBURA (R) — Authorities in Burundi are urging thousands of Hutus who fled the recent fighting in the capital to return to their homes in Bujumbura.

But the returning residents must register individually with the authorities in the city — a move apparently designed to keep out the armed Hutu militias who have been accused of attacking units of the Tutsi-dominated Burundi army.

Burundi Radio broadcast the calls for return late Saturday, after a rare day of calm in Bujumbura, which for weeks has echoed with the sound of gunfire and grenade explosions.

On Sunday there was no sign of any significant movement of Hutus back into the city, but local officials said they expected to see people returning to their homes soon.

They said arrangements were in hand to register all people returning, but would not comment on suggestions that this was a move to bar members of Hutu militias.

Tutsi Prime Minister Antoine Nduwayo led festivities in the capital Saturday, marking 33 years of independence from Belgium. He warned that without peace in the country foreign powers might be tempted to intervene to sort out the ethnic mess which has led to the killing of thousands in the last two years.

Mr. Nduwayo spoke at a ceremony in Bujumbura's National Stadium which was mainly attended by Tutsi members of his UPRONA party. Few Hutus were in the crowd.

UPRONA, the ruling party before the introduction of multi-party politics in 1993, is allied with the majority FRODEBU party, supported mainly by Hutus, in the government.

President Sylvestre Ntibunganya, a Hutu, took part in a separate Independence Day ceremony at Gitega, a region with a mainly Hutu population.

Bujumbura became a mainly Tutsi city as thousands of Hutus fled the capital in surrounding hills in the last few weeks following hit-and-run battles between Hutu militiamen and the Burundi army.

On Friday, heavy shooting forced tens of thousands more of the displaced Hutus to flee deeper into the hills around Bujumbura.

Mr. Nduwayo, in a clear reference to last week's threat by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to support foreign military intervention in Burundi unless ethnic violence was brought to an end, appealed to his followers to promote peace.

The OAU warned at its annual summit last week that it could not afford a second Rwanda, where up to a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered last year.

Burundi has the same racial mix as neighbouring Rwanda.

Philippine leader sees peace with Muslim rebels

GENERAL SANTOS, Philippines (R) — Philippine President Fidel Ramos said Sunday he hoped a deal would soon be reached with Muslim rebels on setting up an autonomous region in the southern Philippines to end a decades-old separatist war.

Mr. Ramos told Muslim and Christian politicians from the troubled Mindanao region he hoped Congress would pass a law by next March allowing the formation of a provisional autonomous government.

He said Manila and the mainstream Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) still needed to negotiate some contentious issues but he expressed confidence over the outcome.

"I am confident that... an enduring peace could well be at hand here in Mindanao. This in turn will lead to an outburst of economic growth... such as Mindanao has never seen," he said.

Government and rebel panels are trying to reach agreement so the provisional government can be established before regional elections next March.

"Before this date of March 1996, Congress hopefully shall be able to pass a... (law) to implement the preliminary agreements in the negotiations with the MNLF," Mr. Ramos said.

After Congress has passed the law, a plebiscite is to be held "and then we could have a transitional mechanism in place towards a broader autonomous structure," he added.

Mr. Ramos was speaking in the southern city of General Santos during his second trip to Mindanao in a month. He has been trying to persuade local politicians opposed to any MNLF ascendancy to support his peace efforts.

Officials have said the provisional government would hold office for about a year. Elections would then be held to select a regular regional parliament.

One proposal being studied by Manila and the MNLF is for the provisional government to be headed by MNLF Chairman Nur Misuari. He would be assisted by Muslim and Christian deputies, rebel sources said.

More than 50,000 people have died since 1972 in the MNLF-led war in the region, regarded as the ancestral home of the country's five million Muslim minority.

The urgency of a peace agreement has been hastened by the emergence of Muslim extremist groups opposed to peace talks, officials and rebels have said.

Fifty-three people, mostly Christians, were killed when armed men linked by the military to the radical Abu Sayyaf faction pillaged Ipil town last April.

The MNLF has split into several factions, with the Abu Sayyaf the most radical.

Meanwhile, a statement issued Sunday in the name of a Communist rebel death squad warned Philippine oil industry leaders and executives of foreign oil companies that they would be attacked if they raised petrol prices.

Jordan Times

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Codes encumber dreams

IT MUST be very difficult for the Arab League "committee of experts," which is currently meeting in Cairo, to achieve its stated aim and work out a code of honour to govern relations between Arab states. Rather than "honour," relations between Arab states in the past 40 years have unfortunately been driven by self-interest, power alliances and mutual suspicions. Thus, based on the experiences of the past four decades alone, we doubt that the Arab World can get its act together on abstract concepts and any kind of moral codes on their own.

The age-old dream of the "Arab Nation," still very strong in the hearts of most Arabs, and the stated aim of many Arab leaders to "unite" that nation from the "Atlantic Ocean to the Arab Gulf," has of course been a noble cause. But it has proved to be just that — a dream. Now, towards the end of the century and the start of a new millennium, it seems that the Arab nation-states as mostly created by foreign powers at the beginning of this century are here to stay.

This is why perhaps we have to cast another shadow of doubt on the proposed code of honour. What we should be concentrating on instead is the need to work out a new model for relations between our countries. The European experiment is worth studying in this regard. But first and foremost the Arab states need to come up with new practical methods to end the era of mutual fears, suspicions and mistrust. Boundaries have to be worked out, delineated and fixed. Claims and counter-claims must be settled. In effect a new definition for the Arab Nation, and ways of realising it, has to be devised. Perhaps the Cairo meeting of the "experts," or for that matter any different group, should look at the tasks differently and come up with a declaration of a Rome-type understanding. It is unfortunate that the Arab League itself is being crippled by its own charter and archaic ways of doing business. It also is unfortunate that neither the League nor its members would cooperate on institutional basis with Arab think-tanks and grassroots organisations, such as the Beirut-based Centre for Arab Unity Studies. That centre, to name only one, has produced over the years a wealth of studies on matters related to Arab integration or disintegration.

It is most discouraging to think that we in the Arab World are not yet ready to tackle our problems in scientific and pragmatic ways. It is frightening to feel that we will not do so before we sink still deeper in the quagmire of our own differences and petty quarrels.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Dustour daily said Sunday that the situation between Egypt and Sudan these days reflect the actual tension that prevails among other Arab countries. The leaderships in Cairo and Khartoum could for the time being avert military confrontation but who knows what might happen in the future because the present enmity as displayed on the part of Sudan and Egypt towards each other has brought matters to a head, said Taher Al Adwan. Indeed, said the writer, relations among Arab countries since the Gulf crisis have been more restrained than ever before because Arab leaders failed to resort to reason and preferred hostile stands towards one another. The writer said that the situation has deteriorated to such a degree that it became impossible for 10 out of more than 20 Arab leaders to meet under one roof to discuss serious questions besetting the Arab World. Any observer of the situation in the Arab World, continued the writer, can expect war to flare up between Syria and Iraq, between Egypt and Sudan and between Algeria and Morocco in view of the hostile stands these countries are displaying towards one another.

SABAH MADANI, a writer in Al Ra'i, discussed the question of rising prices of basic foodstuffs in Jordan, expressing solidarity with the limited and low income groups who are bearing the brunt. Citizens who could be classified as middle class are unable to buy their needs of fruits and vegetables while the low income groups and the needy feel that obtaining such commodities is a desire beyond reach due to soaring prices, said the writer. Wondering why the soaring cost of living hit Jordan, which used to appear as an oasis of stability, the writer said ordinary citizens whose income has not increased to a degree enabling them to buy their needs are appalled at the situation and are helpless. Help, he said, can only come from the Ministry of Supply, which is supposed to control prices and prevent any manipulations and profiteering on the part of the greedy merchants. It is unreasonable, added the writer, to see the ministry failing to do its duty and allowing the merchants a free hand in the local markets, said the writer who stressed the need for immediate intervention on the part of the concerned authorities to end the plight of the Jordanian citizens in general and the needy among them in particular.

Human Rights File

By Waleed Sa'di

Criminals must be punished

ABOLITIONISTS, MEANING those who are opposed to the death penalty, rest their case, inter alia, on the premise that people who commit crimes are not really responsible for their action. According to the thesis of the abolitionists, criminals are not self-made criminals but are the products of their environment, be that social, economic or psychological. This is not to mention the genetic factor, which is that people who commit heinous crimes inherit the tendency to do so from their immediate and distant parents.

This proposition, which attempts to exonerate offenders of the law from responsibility, has divided scientists and jurists alike. If it turns out to be true that whatever wrong we commit is not of our own making but the product of circumstances beyond our control, then the entire penal system is open to questioning. Strangely enough, people who are opposed to capital punishment would have no qualms about the imprisonment of individuals committing offences on the theory that keeping them incarcerated and away from the public is away of protecting society from "ill people" without imposing a real punishment on them. In other words, for such a school of thought, the detention of criminals is not really a punishment but a method to protect society from people prone to perpetrating serious offences. According to the logic of this submission, imprisoned people must be rehabilitated during their incarceration and made socially adapted to live according to the rules and regulations that civilised societies have articulated and adopted.

I personally do not buy this line of thinking altogether even though I understand the impact of environment and hereditary factors on human behaviour. It is scientifically proven that we inherit many genes that determine our behaviour. We are also affected by our environment in many ways. Still if we accept the proposition that man, unlike animals, is a thinking being capable of distinguishing right from wrong under even the most trying circumstances, then "punishment" per se becomes part and parcel of man's environment that helps shape her or his judgement on law and order issues.

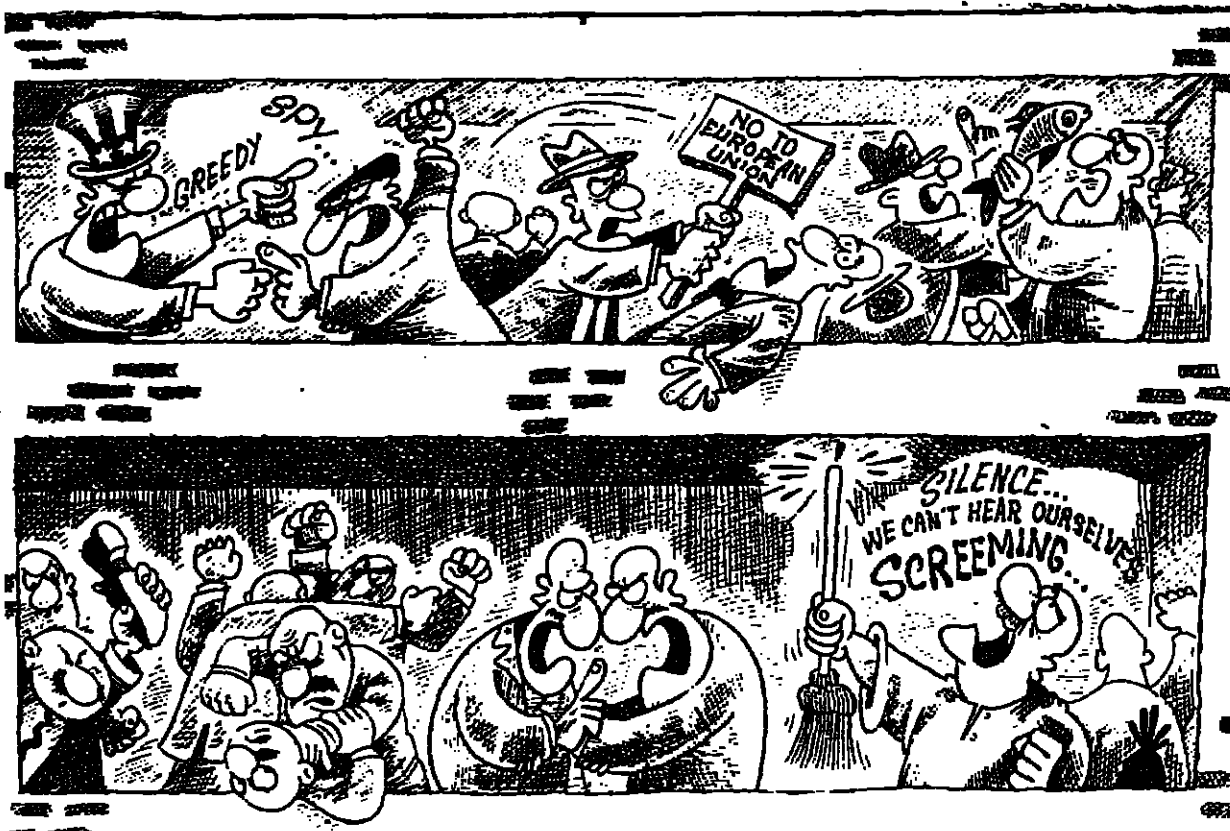
Understandably many psychologists dispute the validity of deterrence that lies behind punishment. On the other

hand there are many social scientists and anthropologists who support this premise.

Let's take a simple example to illustrate this point. In countries where there is stiff punishment for traffic offenders, it was found that accidents on the streets and highways of such countries are considerably reduced. If, for example, we in Jordan begin to hand out heavy fines on drivers not heeding stop signs, we will in not time have this problem out of our system of driving and at the end reduce the primary causes of traffic violations to a bare minimum.

The same goes, for other offences, be they economic or social. If people who keep on murdering their sisters or wives in the name of honour stop being softly treated by our judicial system, there is no doubt in my mind that sooner than later people would think many times before they commit such crimes. If people who sexually attack children and murder them know that they will be apprehended at one stage or another and that there would be no escape from capital punishment, I must presume that such a group of people could be deterred from perpetrating their crimes.

I sometimes wonder why, for example, crimes are on the rise in many industrial countries where there is a "soft" approach to crime. You cannot convince me that there is no correlation between this meek treatment of criminals and the rate of crime. I certainly do not have the full answer to this controversy about legal responsibility for crime. Criminologists have still a long way to go before they can fully understand crime and punishment. There is obviously a need for a continuing research into this vexing subject before man knows best how to deal with criminals. As for me the case has yet to be made against punishment as a deterrent. And when a man or a woman knowingly takes the life of an innocent person, then the appropriate punishment must be meted that would make others similarly poised to think about taking other lives. If we must deny society the duty to take the life of a criminal who commits cold blooded murder because that would be uncivilised, then we must find an effective way to convince killers not to take the lives of innocent people because that would be also an uncivilised behaviour.



Palestinian refugees in Lebanon: Unwanted, uncounted

NO PALESTINIANS are as cruelly trapped as the refugees in Lebanon. Israel will not let them return to their homeland; Lebanon will not let them settle in their adopted country. Their life is harsh and growing harsher; their future empty opaque.

Most of Lebanon's Palestinians come from Galilee or Israel's coastal cities, and are therefore unlikely to benefit from the modest repatriation schemes which concentrate on refugees who have relations in Gaza or the West Bank or who were displaced by the 1967 war. Meanwhile, opposition to Palestinian "implantation" is an issue that unites the disunited Lebanese. Rejection of implantation was written into the Taif accords of 1989 which ended the civil war, thus implicitly blaming the Palestinians for the 15 years of fighting.

Wrapped up in their own post-war anxieties, the Lebanese spare no thought for others. The fact that the Palestinians were once a relatively powerful group gives their fall a touch of nemesis. As a result of this public indifference, the government is free to do things that make living conditions for the Palestinians even more untenable pushing them deliberately towards migration.

The most effective of these moves is the constraint on living space. Because the Palestinians are

excluded from all Lebanese public services, and from most salaried jobs, they are uniquely dependent on the refugee camps which, through the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), provide free or low-rent housing and on-the-spot social services.

Twelve of the original 17 camps have survived the war: No expansion at all is permitted. The Lebanese government has vetoed the creation of new camps, the reconstruction of camps that were destroyed in the fighting, and even any rebuilding, financed by UNRWA inside the camps that still exist. Such space as remains is threatened by the rebuilding of Beirut: Shatila camp is likely to be engulfed in the expansion of the Sports City, wide highways stop just short of both Ain Hilweh and Bourj Barajneh.

The eviction of Palestinians, squatting in the city after being displaced from their camps by the war, began in late 1993 and continues discreetly, building by building. Evicted families may be paid indemnities of up to \$5,000, but this is not enough to buy them somewhere to live, even in camps where the veto on UNRWA reconstruction has produced a rash of illegal, speculative building. But once people receive an indemnity, UNRWA crosses them off its list of homeless families. What happens to them then? They go from shanty-town to shanty-town, the bulldozers following them.

Lebanon continues to refuse to extend civil rights to the Palestinians, in particular the right to work. This month around 20 Palestinian doctors will go on trial for practising a profession limited to Lebanese members of the medical union. The authorities — and the Palestinians were better off when there was no central authority — justify their actions with talk of the country's economic difficulties, an argument at odds with Lebanon's belief in the free market. Palestinians believe, with some justice, that the Lebanese are trying to force them out through poverty.

But, in fact, the creation of poverty is not increasing refugee emigration. More and more doors are closed to them. Since the end of the civil war, countries such as Germany, Denmark and Sweden have stopped giving asylum to Palestinians from Lebanon. No Arab country except Libya allows them in. Canada accepts only Palestinians with professional qualifications and/or bank accounts. This underlines the point that it is precisely those refugees whom Lebanon would most like to get rid of — the poor, the under-qualified — who are least able to emigrate.

Since the start of the Israeli-PLO peace process, international aid for Palestinian refugees has been skewed towards Gaza (less to the West Bank) and away from the refugees "outside." To make matters worse, the decline in aid, both from the U.N.

and from relief agencies, has coincided with the phasing out of the PLO as provider of jobs, pensions, scholarship, and medical services.

One peculiarity of the Palestinians' situation in Lebanon is how little is known about it. Even the size of the community is a matter of dispute: UNRWA works on the assumption of 338,000 people, but that is the roughest of guides. There are few health statistics, despite a health-care crisis. Facts essential for the intelligent deployment of aid, the number of female-headed households, orphans and old people on their own, mortality rates, children of school-age out of school — simply do not exist. This lack of knowledge discourages people who might otherwise have tried to do something to help.

Syria, which in the end takes the decisions about Lebanon, has given no indication of its position on the refugees. Some people believe that Syria is not opposed to reopening the Lebanese-Palestinian negotiations that have been frozen since the Israeli-Palestinian talks began. Others think that, with two big issues looming — Lebanon's presidential election and Israeli-Syrian peace talks — the Syrians will not allow anything to disturb stability in Lebanon. The Syrians may well prefer to keep the Palestinians as a card in their hands.

The Economist

Iran, Iraq driven together by common foe

By Anwar Faruqi
The Associated Press

NICOSIA — Seven years after their 1980-88 war, Iran and Iraq remain divided by a sea of differences. But Washington's efforts to isolate the Gulf giants may be driving them closer together.

So far, the visible results are few. But the recent increase in high-profile meetings raises the specter of a reconciliation between the two countries that Washington considers most dangerous to its interests.

Over the past few years both have demonstrated their abilities to undermine U.S. interests — Iraq by threatening oil supplies with its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, Iran by opposing the U.S.-sponsored Arab-Israeli peace process.

They are among seven nations the U.S. government has officially labelled "sponsors of international terrorism."

In a recent dispatch, Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency referred to a Tehran-Baghdad alliance as "a nightmare scenario" for the West.

Some observers see Iran and Iraq's professed attempt at reconciliation as little more than a warning to the United States.

"The main motivation for Iran's gesture toward Iraq is that Tehran is trying to highlight to Washington the dangers of pushing it too far," Vahe Petrossian, an Iran specialist with the London-based Middle East Economic Digest, said in a telephone interview.

Ever since the Clinton administration formulated its "dual containment" policy targeting Iran and Iraq nearly two years ago, the historic foes have professed a new desire to end their differences.

Last month President Bill Clinton imposed a trade embargo on Iran for allegedly pursuing a covert nuclear weapons program. Two weeks later Tehran dispatched an 11-man delegation to Baghdad for talks on improving ties.

Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati's top adviser, Ali Khorram, who led the team, reported "positive results" in talks on improving relations.

The Iranian news agency has said that an Iraqi delegation is expected in Tehran shortly, to be followed by a visit by Mr. Velayati to Baghdad.

The Iran News daily, which is close to the Foreign Ministry, said in an editorial June 3 that U.S. pressure had left Iran and Iraq with little choice but "to opt for bettering relations."

Officially, Iran maintains that the U.S. embargo has nothing to do with its current quest for reconciliation with Iraq.

"Our negotiations predate the sanctions, and there is no doubt that our side is motivated by a genuine desire to improve relations," Saeed Rajaie Khorasani, a member of the Iranian parliament's foreign relations committee, said in a telephone interview from Tehran.

Iraq is suffering under U.N. sanctions imposed after it invaded Kuwait. It may be raising the possibility of a rapprochement with Iran to increase pressure on Washington, which opposes a lifting of the embargo.

"From the point of view of the Iraqi regime, Baghdad has more to gain from tension with Iran than from a more relaxed stance," Laith Kubba, a member of the Khoi Foundation, a London-based Iraqi opposition group, said in a telephone interview.

He said Iraq's President Saddam Hussein was looking for a payoff from the United States and other Western countries as well as the Gulf Arab states in exchange for continued hostility towards revolutionary Iran.

In 1990, when the U.S.-backed allied coalition based on his border ready to drive Iraqi troops out of Kuwait, Baghdad quickly pulled back 300,000 troops from Iranian territory, began exchanging prisoners of war, and resumed diplomatic ties.

Iran has not been unresponsive. Its government says sanctions against Iraq must be lifted immediately and has turned a blind eye to cross-border trade which undermines the U.N. embargo.

Mr. Petrossian estimated the illegal trade at up to a \$2 million a year. Last year the United States accused Iran of helping Baghdad smuggle petroleum out of Iraq.

Iran also has backed Iraq in opposition to the U.N.-backed "safe haven" created five years ago to protect Iraq's 3.5 million Kurdish minority.

But these shared interests are dwarfed by the differences between the two neighbours.

Over the past five years the two have exchanged about 75,000 prisoners of war, but both claim thousands more remain. In addition, the Iraqis want about \$1 trillion in war reparations from Iraq, which is keen to get back 115 military planes and 30 airliners it flew to Iran for safekeeping during the 1991 Gulf war.

There's also an unsettled border dispute over the Shatt Al Arab waterway, which forms the two countries' southernmost boundary, and the issue of the outlawed opposition groups operating from each other's territory.

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LETTERS

Facts distorted

To the Editor:

I AM writing to clarify a misleading Associated Press story reprinted in the June 18 edition of the Jordan Times. The story, under the heading "News in Brief," called "Study Blames Arab-Americans for bad relations," is distorted and in fact, an inaccurate portrayal of the findings of the study that was prepared by the Arab-American Institute.

The study did not try assigning blame for the violence in Cleveland's inner-city, which has claimed the lives of 12 Arab-American merchants over the past two years. The study instead sought to delve into the origins of the phenomenon and discovered that the situation in Cleveland's inner-city is not unlike the problems that face other American inner-cities where different ethnic and immigrant groups are brought together by depressed economic conditions.

The study found that in this situation the strife was between Arab-Americans and African-Americans although Americans, and Hispanic-Americans. The study offered suggestions to Cleveland city officials on how to improve community relations between the two groups. Included among these were the hiring of Arabic-speaking city and sensitivity training for police and health inspectors.

The study did not blame Arab-Americans or African-Americans. As I mentioned in the introduction to the study, there are two victim communities in this tragedy against each other.

James J. Zogby,
President,
Arab-American Institute,
Washington.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

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Features

Diplomacy seen as inhospitable career for women

By Anthony Goodman
Reuters

UNITED NATIONS — Although women have made advances in many fields in recent decades, diplomacy does not appear to be one of them, according to a U.N. report.

"Throughout its 50 years of history, the vast majority of the delegates selected by their national governments to represent their countries at United Nations bodies have been male," the report said.

"Women continue to be largely absent in the highest ranks of the permanent missions to the United Nations in New York," it added.

In 1989, when the world body had 159 members compared with 185 now, women accounted for 20 per cent of the diplomatic personnel of permanent missions. Fifty-seven of the delegations had no women on their diplomatic staff.

"As of January 1994, only seven mission out of 187 (including two observer missions) were headed by women. Among the 240 delegates holding ambassadorial rank, only 11 were women," added the report, titled "Participation of Women in Political Life and Decision-Making."

"Of the total diplomatic staff of missions, women represented only 22 per cent. In the permanent missions of 67 member states, there were no

women at all. "The figures reflect negligible increase since 1949, when women at the diplomatic level in permanent missions to the United Nations constituted 16 per cent of the total."

Of the 49 presidents of the U.N. General Assembly elected since 1945, only two were women — Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit of India in 1953 and Angie Brooks of Liberia in 1969.

Since the establishment of the 15-judge International Court of Justice at the Hague in 1945 there has not been a single woman judge.

Among the numerous U.N. conferences held since 1945 and headed by appointed senior U.N. officials, only six were headed by women, and four of those were world conferences on women.

Of the 89 executive heads of various organisations of the U.N. system elected or appointed by member states, there have been no women.

But four women have been confirmed by the U.N. General Assembly as heads of major U.N. programmes. They are Sadako Ogata of Japan, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees; Catherine Bertini of the United States, executive director of the World Food Programme; Elizabeth Dowdsell of Canada, executive director of the U.N. Environment Programme and Dr. Nafis Sadik of Pakistan, executive director of the U.N. Population Fund.

Those who heard about feminism, otherwise called "hilleh," know for sure that it has both internal and external use for the body. "I have it in the morning because it is good for the kidneys," says housekeeper Hanneh Hijazien. "I believe it nurtures the complexion," says lawyer Randa Zalaito.

Yet, in spite of its numerous benefits, many individuals do not know of the existence of hilleh. "I have never heard of it," says internist Ala' Toukan.

Though gaining significant recognition in folk medicine, especially amongst the older generations, "some therapeutic effects of hilleh have only

Hardliners plan next refuge, fearing Israel-Syria peace

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Hardline Palestinian groups opposed to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) are under no illusions about what a peace deal between Israel and Syria would mean for them: a move to another country.

The groups opposed to the Palestinians' peace process with Israel have spent much of their lives moving from one Arab capital to another and are already contemplating where they might go next if a peace deal is reached.

"After Damascus we will find another suitable, safe place," said Fathi Shakaki, secretary general of Islamic Jihad, one of the main opposition groups, who insisted a relocation would

have no effect on anti-Israeli attacks.

"Our presence in Syria is transitory and an accord between this country and Israel would not affect our action inside Palestine because we send neither men nor weapons from Damascus. Our mujahideen (fighters) are inside the border as well as our weapons," he said.

Mr. Shakaki, 44, is no stranger to moving on. He was expelled from the Gaza Strip to Lebanon in 1988 and settled in Damascus a year later. Since then he has spent long periods in Libya, Lebanon and Algeria.

His career with Islamic Jihad, he said, began in 1979 when he was a medical student at Zagazig University in the Nile Delta, Egypt, and created the nucleus of the group with other Palestinian students.

Mr. Shakaki, like many Palestinian activists in exile here, insists that help offered to the groups by Syria is not the key to their military operations and remains confident about the political future of the movements.

"The Palestinian Islamist movements have become a factor in the political equation of the Middle East that cannot be ignored," he said. "Our presence abroad is symbolic and our role is more to do with public relations."

Abu Mohammad Mustafa, the Damascus representative of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), said his group would also not be affected militarily if it was forced to leave Syria. "That would not affect the heart of our organisation in the West Bank and Gaza," he said.

Mr. Mustafa, a member of the Hamas political office, said his organisation's presence in Damascus was already "very limited."

The leader of another Palestinian faction said Hamas was already being careful about publicizing its activities in the Syrian capital.

"Trips to Damascus by the president of the Hamas political office, Masha Abu Marzouk, are surrounded by the

greatest discretion," said the activist, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"Abu Marzouk paid a discreet visit to Damascus this week before going to Cairo on Wednesday for meetings with Egyptian leaders," he added.

Nayef Hawatmeh, leader of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), would also not rule out an eventual departure from Damascus, although he too minimised the potential effects.

"Syria provides us with logistical support. If it is withdrawn from us, that would not make a great deal of difference because it is a

secondary issue," he said.

"Between 1983 and 1993, relations between the DFLP and Damascus were frosty because the DFLP refused to support the split (recommended by Damascus at the time) within Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement," said Mr. Hawatmeh, who kept a second home in Algeria during those years.

Abu Ali Mustafa, the deputy leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, also acknowledged that a peace treaty between Israel and Syria would have an impact on his movement's political activities in Damascus.

"But there's a long way to go before any such agreement is reached," he said.

A condiment 'worth its weight in gold'

By Rimal Cortbawi
Special to the Jordan Times

FROM THE "bosom of our Jordanian nature springs a condiment, which, to those informed of its diverse uses, is worth its weight in gold," according to biologist Khamis Bitar, owner of Systema Scientific Research Centre.

Those who heard about fenugreek, otherwise called "hilleh," know for sure that it has both internal and external use for the body. "I have it in the morning because it is good for the kidneys," says housekeeper Hanneh Hijazien. "I believe it nurtures the complexion," says lawyer Randa Zalaito.

Yet, in spite of its numerous benefits, many individuals do not know of the existence of hilleh. "I have never heard of it," says internist Ala' Toukan.

Though gaining significant recognition in folk medicine, especially amongst the older generations, "some therapeutic effects of hilleh have only

given 100 per cent positive results with tests on animal models," says Munib Saket, professor of pharmacology and dean of pharmacy at the Applied Science University. But many of the benefits have stood the test of time and are "taken for granted," according to Mr. Bitar, by the numerous seekers of these nutritious plant seeds.

"There are over 200 'attar' (perfume and herb vendors) in Jordan, and they all sell hilleh," says Mr. Bitar. "We have between 15 and 17 thousand customers from all levels and classes of society, and they always come asking for fenugreek seeds or products containing them," he stressed.

Although indigenous to North Africa and India, fenugreek seeds are now cultivated in many European countries. As one of the oldest known medicinal plants, fenugreek was highly thought of by Hippocrates, said Dr. Saket.

The first most authentic references to hilleh were done by Arab writers, and these go back to the first few centuries A.D. Dr. Saket says. These publications give rough descriptions of the seed components, which were later confirmed and expanded on in international pharmacological references, such as the British Pharmacopoeia and Martindale Extra Pharmacopoeia. "Among other useful chemicals, hilleh contains 25 per cent, 6 per cent fat and is rich in vitamins and minerals," says Dr. Saket. Due to its various uses, he adds hilleh was introduced in Europe as early as the 9th century A.D.

Medical uses of hilleh include its action as a nutritive, laxative, digestive, throat soother and appetite booster, says Dr. Saket. Tests on animal models, he adds have also proved fenugreek to be an anti-diabetic substance that can also reduce blood levels of cholesterol and have shown that is aqueous extract can heal gastric ulcers, relax muscles and significantly in-

hibit liver carcinoma. "It is also used in China to treat cancer of the cervix," Dr. Saket adds.

It has recently been mentioned in a Jerusalem Post report that hilleh has been proved to lower levels of cholesterol and blood sugar.

Being also a flavouring, hilleh is used by Indians in making curry powder, according to Dr. Saket.

Topical effects of hilleh involve its use as an emollient and as treatment for cellulitis and certain unpleasant skin diseases. It has an almost spontaneous effect in poultice to treat boils, says Dr. Saket, and is particularly useful in relieving child pains in the winter.

"In addition, hilleh is particularly good in activating the process of lactation in women and is justifiably believed to act as an aphrodisiac in men," Dr. Saket says.

As a nutrient, hilleh proved to be excellent in giving strength and energy

to the body. Patients are advised to have hilleh during their post-operative convalescence period," says Dr. Saket. "Drinking aqueous hilleh extract sweetened with honey every morning gives me and my wife our supply of energy to start our day's work," says Mr. Bitar.

Hilleh has no side effects whatsoever, according to Mr. Bitar. "How can anyone go wrong with hilleh when its sole disadvantage is its distinctive smell that normally engulfs the body (as responsible constituents are carried out with perspiration) and which is not unpleasant to all?" asks Mr. Bitar. Some people even like the smell of hilleh, Mr. Bitar adds.

In France, he says, 80 per cent of the people use herbal oils for more than 90 per cent of illnesses.

"My wife prepares a cream from hilleh and I use it daily, which is why hardly anyone believes that I am 70 years old," says Mr. Bitar.

As well as clearing the blood, hilleh cleans, nourishes, moisturises and protects the skin.

"Truly, drinking hilleh extract on daily basis can protect the body from many diseases," says Mr. Bitar. "This is why we decided to make hilleh biscuits as part of our range of natural products," he added.

Generally, hilleh's versatility is witnessed in the different ways it can be treated. "Hilleh can be powdered, soaked or boiled with water or used to make desserts, according to Mr. Bitar.

In Syria and Egypt, hilleh is cultivated and used in great amounts, according to Dr. Saket. The fenugreek seeds are cultivated in the north of Jordan, and their flowering time comes around March or April.

"Luckily we have good quality hilleh, and it is available in such satisfactory abundance as to enable us to make the best use of this extraordinary gift of nature," says Mr. Bitar.

Egypt warns Tourabi

(Continued from page 1)

the plot to kill as "all lies and fabrication." "The revolution will not retreat from its course of Islam and peace," Gen. Bashir told thousands gathered in a conference hall. "They will not be able to hinder our march."

Sudanese leaders sounded a common theme Sunday, calling Egypt's charges part of a Western plot to undermine the Islamic regime. Sudan has poor relations with most of its neighbours, particularly Egypt and Eritrea, which accuse it of training militants. The United States says Sudan is among states supporting terrorism.

"Sudan is the lightning torch of Islam in the region and they want to extinguish this light," Sudan's culture and information minister, Abdul Basit Sabdarat, told the Associated Press.

He said Sudan still feared an Egyptian attack despite public statements to the contrary and promised that Sudanese are "ready to sacrifice our blood to protect our land and honour."

War with Egypt was always unlikely, and Egypt's 440,000-strong army greatly outclasses its Sudanese counterpart. But both countries have sought to use the dispute to rally flagging support.

An Egyptian Information Minister Safwat Al Sherif warned Sudan it "should understand that all options are open to President Mubarak and they are limitless in the face of any act or procedure that threatens Egyptian national security or provokes the feelings of Egyptians."

He added that Sudanese "should stop beating the drums of war and stop issuing empty threats to cover up the crime they committed."

A Sudanese vendor summed up fears that the dispute could get out of hand, leading to a standoff in which neither backs down.

"People are afraid that both regimes might find it useful for their own selfish purposes to go to war if that will serve their interests," Awad Razouq said in a downtown Khartoum market.

Iraq, an ally of Sudan, also joined the fray on Sunday. An Iraqi government session, chaired by President Saddam Hussein, called on the Egyptian people not to let their leaders use Egypt's military as "a big stick" against Sudan, Iraqi media reported Sunday, quoting a government spokesman.

Meanwhile in Jeddah, the secretary general of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to intervene personally in the crisis between the two countries.

The Islamic Press Agency said Sunday that Hamid Algalib met with the Egyptian ambassador Fathi Sheddil and Sudanese Consul Ibrahim Kabbashi.

He gave messages for the heads of state proposing to act as a mediator "between these two member countries of the OIC" and urging them to "contain tension which threaten the future of their relations."

A top-level Yemeni advisor arrived in Cairo meanwhile to discuss his country's reported links to the attempt to kill President Mubarak.

"We will try to explain this to our Egyptian brothers," Mohammed Salim Bassandawa, told journalists at the start of a two-day visit. He is an advisor to Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

"We are concerned to the greatest possible extent with this matter and will provide the Egyptians with the necessary information to help them and prove that we are as concerned as they are for their security," he said.

Sanaa has denied reports that Mohammed Siraj, thought to be the mastermind of the failed ambush in Addis Ababa, held a Yemeni passport.

The Ethiopian press reported after Monday's attack that Siraj held dual Saudi and Yemeni nationality. Egypt said Siraj was Sudanese and had been arrested in Addis Ababa. Ethiopian police have denied the arrest.

"Yemen is against terrorism and violence of any kind and will not permit anyone to export terrorism to any other country," Mr. Bassandawa said.

Mr. Musa has announced he will visit Yemen on Monday with a letter from Mr. Mubarak to Mr. Saleh. He would meet with "high officials" to discuss "relations between Egypt and Yemen" and the "development in the situation in the Arab World."

In another development, a Sudanese minister said he had met ambassadors from four member nations of the U.N. Security Council and asked them to pressure Egypt to stop its "aggressions" in Halaib.

Mr. Atabani said he asked them to "exercise their international responsibilities to halt Egyptian aggressions of all forms against Sudan."

On Saturday Sudan made a complaint to the U.N. Security Council accusing Egypt of attacking Sudanese troops in Halaib and asked the United Nations to intervene.

Khartoum said the clashes broke out on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Mr. Atabani told the ambassadors that Egypt "initiated the military escalation in Halaib and killed three Sudanese," an army officer and two policemen.

Egypt has acknowledged the death of the two policemen but not the officer, and says the Sudanese started the shooting in the desert border region which Egypt controls militarily.

Mr. Atabani also complained of Egyptian support for opposition groups aiming to overthrow the government in Khartoum.

Cairo is "encouraging" through the media political mercenary activities and subversive operations on in-

stallations and civilians, which should be denounced by the standards of justice condemning terrorism," he said.

He underlined to the diplomats Sudan's desire "not to escalate the situation militarily or politically and to resort to reason and not passion" but warned that his country would defend itself "no matter how dear the sacrifice."

He dismissed Cairo's allegations that the Sudanese initiated the clashes as "illogical."

"Egyptian forces in Halaib are eight to ten times the Sudanese, who are mostly policemen. Moreover, Sudan is fighting a war against rebels in the south and so would not consider opening a new front in the north," he said.

He recalled that in April 1992 Egypt killed two Sudanese soldiers at the Abu Ramad post in Halaib, saying: "Despite that, Sudan has exercised patience and self-restraint and even proposed mechanisms for dialogue" to solve the dispute.

PLO, Israel to launch fresh bid for deal

(Continued from page 1)

arrangements. Redeployment would start four weeks after an agreement was signed. This first phase would be completed 21 days before Palestinian elections.

PLO officials said Israel had agreed to pull back from major towns although Ramallah and Bethlehem, both near Jerusalem, would not be handed over fully until the completion of by-pass roads for settlers.

Mr. Peres said the talks were very complicated for both sides and he said "some gaps" remained. He refused to speculate when an agreement would be signed.

"I can only state that we will make absolutely no concessions on issues relating to security," he told Israel's army radio.

Mr. Arafat would say only that he had held "very detailed talks" with Mr. Peres on "all the issues."

A U.S. official, who refused to be identified, said the Clinton administration wanted to host an Israel-PLO signing ceremony in Washington on July 17.

"That is the date they (the U.S. administration) are aiming for... the objective is to hold the end of the negotiations in Washington, to finalise the last detail and then to hold the ceremony," the official said.

Both sides have accused each other of breaking the truce since it was concluded June 20 here, but in a positive development Sunday, the handful of Chechen fighters in the rebel bastion of Bamut signalled they may be willing to throw down their guns and join the peace process.

The 20 or so separatists had said earlier they would fight to the death if necessary.

In Moscow meanwhile,

House votes

(Continued from page 12)

work. He also said that working on two shifts means that employers have to provide transportation and food for employees.

"And the transportation system here is not reliable, especially for women who cannot go back home late," he said.

Deputy Taber Masri said

House votes

there should be no restriction to the working hours and days since these factors change with time and circumstances.

The House finally voted in favour of giving employers the right to reduce working hours and days but limited working hours to a maximum of 48 per week and working days to six per week.

Chechen talks snagged

(Continued from page 12)

ossal whereby Chechenya would retain a form of sovereignty within the Russian Federation, a degree of autonomy which falls well short of Chechen demands for independence.

Earlier Sunday signs that the peace process might be buckling were detectable when Chechen commander Aslam Maskhadov arrived without the promised proof that Chechen forces were respecting a disarmament agreement signed shortly after the start of the talks two weeks ago.

Mr. Maskhadov had pledged he would return Sunday with armoured vehicles and artillery pieces as a sign disarmament was proceeding, and his empty-handed return may have been due to rumours in the Chechen camp that Russian forces were continuing to violate a ceasefire.

Both sides have accused each other of breaking the truce since it was concluded June 20 here, but in a positive development Sunday, the handful of Chechen fighters in the rebel bastion of Bamut signalled they may be willing to throw down their guns and join the peace process.

The 20 or so separatists had said earlier they would fight to the death if necessary.

In Moscow meanwhile,

Serbs shell Sarajevo

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Bildt told reporters the situation was "more complex, more complicated... than it has been for years."

Asked about the likelihood of talks, Mr. Bildt replied: "It is possible, but it is not imminent."

Mr. Bildt, a former Swedish prime minister, arrived unexpectedly in Belgrade Saturday after being asked by the EU last week to resume contact with all parties to the conflict in a bid to relaunch the faltering peace process.

He held talks with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic prior to his meeting Sunday with Mr. Tudjman.

Together with U.N. negotiator Thorvald Stoltenberg,

Mr. Bildt is due Monday to travel to Knin, which the Croatian Serbs claim as their headquarters.

The mediators are also due to travel to Tuzla, north-eastern Bosnia, where the northern contingent of U.N. peacekeepers is based, before returning to Geneva.

During his first peace mission, Mr. Bildt travelled to Sarajevo, Belgrade and Zagreb but not to Pale, the Bosnian Serb stronghold.

Questioned about a visit to Pale, Mr. Bildt said only, "we are going to take the appropriate steps."

Such a visit, he said, was "not scheduled, not excluded."

Prisoners relaunch strike

(Continued from page 1)

to Mr. Arafat when the two met Saturday, the radio said. The radio said the 1,500 prisoners slated for release were from the PLO-ruled Gaza Strip and West Bank enclave of Jericho as well as the town of Jenin, the next to come under PLO rule.

Israeli demonstrators protesting against any Israeli troop redeployment in the West Bank clashed with

police in Jerusalem on Sunday, witnesses said.

Around 300 Israelis, mostly residents of "green line" communities that border the West Bank, gathered outside the prime minister's office as government ministers held their weekly cabinet meeting inside the building.

Police prevented protesters from entering the government compound by force.



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CBJ offers incentives to merging banks

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — In a bid to reduce the number of commercial banks and preempt a possible run on capital in the market, the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) is offering a series of incentives to commercial banks to merge, officials and bankers said Sunday.

The incentives, which include lower interest rates on CBJ loans and higher yield on deposits with the central bank, come in line with CBJ Governor Mohammad Nabulsi's efforts to establish a stronger banking base in the country ahead of expected economic changes in a state of regional peace.

In January this year, the CBJ instructed the nearly 20 Jordanian commercial banks to raise their capital to JD 20 million before the end of 1996. The present capital requirement, which dates back to more than 10 years, is JD 5 million.

Some of the banks are already near the higher requirements, but there are a few smaller banks which might find it difficult to raise

funds from the market, and the CBJ incentives target them, officials explained.

However, it is not yet clear how many banks would take up the offer, banking circles say.

"Some of the smaller banks are like family-run businesses and whoever controls them is unlikely to let go in a hurry," said a senior executive at an international bank in Jordan.

"The market also saw some moves in recent months that indicated some of the larger banks were trying take-overs, and this has led some of the smaller ones to accelerate their moves to raise capital," added the executive.

The CBJ, which has the final say in determining when the banks should go to the market for capital since it has to approve the move, will not allow all the banks to seek capital at the same time, Dr. Nabulsi said in a recent interview with the Jordan Times.

Some of the banks have already moved to raise capital in phases before the 1996 deadline with CBJ approval and others are studying various options.

Brokers at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) say that any rush by banks to seek capital from the stock exchange would have a serious depressing effect on share prices and assert that up to JD 300 million would be drawn away from the market, albeit temporarily.

But Dr. Nabulsi has rejected the assertion and said that the amount involved would not be more than JD 150 million.

He pointed out that many of the banks have voluntary reserves which could be converted to capital without tapping the market. Furthermore, the CBJ would also allow "good and sound" international banks to enter partnerships with local banks and provide the capital, he said.

The main reason behind the move to raise the capital is not any weakness on the part of Jordanian banks but to ensure that they achieve a level of strength that will enable them to handle high-volume financing and related dealings that are expected in the region in the wake of breakthroughs in the Middle East peace process.

Lebanon mulls tax increases to meet pay demands

BEIRUT (R) — The Lebanese government is studying an increase in taxes on luxury goods to finance a proposed pay rise for public sector employees, Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri was quoted on Sunday as saying.

He said the government, which is battling a huge budget deficit, would not increase wages "before securing the necessary revenue to cover this increase."

The announcement follows a warning by acting Finance Minister Fouad Siniora that the deficit is forcing the government to choose between draconian new taxes or cut-

ting back on post-civil war reconstruction.

Newspapers say the government is considering increasing taxes on items like cigars, alcoholic drinks, luxury cars and home electrical appliances.

Mr. Hariri, quoted by several newspapers, said the government was holding weekend meetings to discuss the issue.

It is partly spurred by pressure from Lebanon's 70,000 schoolteachers, who are threatening to refuse to correct year-end examinations if their demand for a 20 per cent pay rise is not met.

The coordinating committee of Lebanon's Labour Unions warned last week that continual erosion of buying power threatened a social explosion unless living standards of the lower-paid could be improved. It said all public sector employees had a right to a 20 per cent pay rise.

The schoolteachers, who have twice been on strike since April, have a monthly starting salary of \$55,000, Lebanese pounds (\$341).

They say their pay and status have plunged as a result of the 1975-90 civil war and their claim would cost the government 163 billion

pounds (\$100 million). Governmental and other sources put the cost at 500 billion pounds (\$307 million).

Financial sources say government spending is already outstripping the 44 per cent deficit of income against expenditure approved by parliament when it voted a 5,630 billion pounds (\$3.4 billion) budget for 1995.

Last year the final budget deficit reached 57 per cent, and some bankers say the current pace of expenditure is higher.

Mr. Siniora told a Financial Times conference last

month that the budget suffered a structural problem caused by a high proportion of fixed payments on debt servicing, public sector wages, social security and pensions.

"We are faced with a dilemma because in order to pay for these fixed obligations we either need to impose draconian tax measures which would choke completely the economy or we need to slash dramatically investment expenditure, which in turn would substantially reduce our future growth potential," he said.

UAE to pursue austerity measures to cut deficit

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE), a key OPEC oil producer, will pursue austerity measures to tackle a budget deficit after previous spending cuts nearly eliminated the shortfall, a minister said Sunday.

The country's 24 federal ministries and departments have been asked to exercise another year of restraint on the grounds that the budget is still heavily reliant on volatile oil earnings, newspapers reported.

In a letter, Finance and Industry Minister Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktum asked government departments not to exceed the 1995 allocations in their 1996 budget and put curbs on new development projects.

"You must consider tight-

ening expenditure compared with that in 1995 and excluding unnecessary spending," he said in the letter, published in the press.

"No new projects will be included in the 1996 budget for any party unless it has completed at least 80 per cent of its existing projects."

Finance and Industry Ministry sources said spending cuts through the year had proved successful in tackling the UAE's federal budget deficit in the past few years despite sharp fluctuations in world oil prices.

They said such cuts, coupled with attempts to boost non-oil earnings, were needed to avert resorting to borrowing or imposing income taxes.

"The UAE has made clear it has no intention to impose

income taxes or issue bonds to finance the shortfall," one source said. "We have determined that the best remedy is to trim actual spending and develop non-oil income."

Central Bank figures showed spending cuts slashed the projected 1994 budget deficit of around 1.4 billion dirhams (\$381 million) to only 15 million dirhams (\$4.08 million) and a 1993 shortfall of 1.7 billion dirhams (\$463 million) to 23.9 million dirhams (\$6.51 million).

In 1992, a deficit of around 1.45 billion dirhams (\$395 million) turned into a surplus of 201 million dirhams (\$56.4 million).

The UAE, which produces around 2.16 million barrels per day (b/d) of oil, started to suffer from a budget deficit in

the mid 1980s, when crude prices began to fall after peaking in the early part of the decade.

The decline has forced other Gulf oil producers to introduce austerity measures and economic reforms to tackle the deficit. But unlike the UAE, most of them have opted for domestic borrowing to shore up the deficit.

"Our economy remains vulnerable to world economic changes due to instability in oil prices. So, we expect revenues in 1996 to be within the limits of the estimated revenues for 1995," Sheikh Hamdan said.

"Oil earnings will remain the main source of financing the budget. Any improvement in prices next year must be utilised in meeting the financial obligations to others

and restoring balance to the federal budget."

In theory, the UAE federal budget is financed by half the income of each of the country's seven emirates. But in practice, more than 80 per cent is contributed by the main oil producer Abu Dhabi and the rest by Dubai.

The 1995 federal expenditure was put at 17.94 billion dirhams (\$4.88 billion) and revenues at around 16.9 billion dirhams (\$4.6 billion), leaving a deficit of \$380 million.

But non-oil income, mainly from overseas investment and newly-introduced fees on government services, was projected to rise to 4.05 billion dirhams (\$1.1 billion) from 3.2 billion dirhams (\$871 million) in 1994. This compares with less than \$200 million in mid 1980s.

APEC economies to slow down, Japan recession unlikely — expert

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Economic growth among most Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum members is expected to slow down in 1995 and 1996, but Japan is unlikely to go into recession, a regional expert said here.

"The outlook for 1995 and 1996 is for somewhat more moderate economic performance across the board," Malcolm Dowling, assistant chief economist of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), told an APEC experts' meeting.

Average growth among the APEC members is expected to slow down to 3.1 per cent through 1996, compared to 3.6 per cent in 1994 and 2.8 per cent the year before, Mr. Dowling said in a paper.

APEC members in the Americas were forecast to

register 2.9 per cent growth in 1995-96, from four per cent last year, while developing Asian countries would enjoy eight per cent expansion, down from 8.9 per cent.

APEC includes Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and the United States.

Mr. Dowling noted that there was concern that the yen's appreciation "is having an adverse impact on the performance of the Japanese economy, perhaps sufficient to tip the country into another recession."

This would have a negative impact on the rest of APEC, he said.

Mr. Dowling, however, was confident the Japan would undergo "continued slow growth but no recession in 1995, and we are guardedly optimistic regarding prospects for 1996."

"We believe that the continuing structural adjustments which Japan is undertaking will provide some additional stimulus to its neighbours through increased flows of (foreign direct investment)," he said.

Further offshore movements would improve the financial performance of Japanese multinationals over the medium term, but bad debts in the banking system and low stock and land values would "inhibit more vigorous lending needed to fuel a more rapid economic recovery."

Arab markets unaffected by political upheaval

DUBAI (R) — A string of key political events had little impact on Arab stock markets last week, with most ending little changed on low-volume summer dealings.

Share prices on Qatar's unofficial market were unaffected by Tuesday's palace coup, which saw Crown Prince Sheikh Hamad oust his father the Emir Sheikh Khalifa.

Dealers said trade was thin as big players left for summer holidays, but prices rose as demand from small investors continued. Al Ahli Bank rose five riyals to 206 riyals. An assassination attempt

on President Hosni Mubarak and the subsequent rise in tensions between Egypt and Sudan failed to impress the Cairo market. Dealers said the seasonal sales of Egyptian shares led the share index to slip less than one point to a nine-month low.

In Bahrain, the formation of a new government left shares largely unaffected. The index dipped 4.82 points to 1,286.66.

Kuwait was one of few Arab markets which gained in the week.

In active dealings the stock index rose 44 points to 1,065 points. Volumes surged 60

per cent to 198 million shares.

Overall demand was buoyed by the unexpectedly high price realised by the government at the auction of most of its stake in National Industries Co. (NIC) to private investors. NIC's share price jumped 43 per cent in the week to 830 fils.

Support also came from the enthusiastic response to the state's sale of 90 million shares of National Real Estate Co. The offer was 39 times oversubscribed, brokers said.

Al Ahli Bank gained 25 fils, or nine per cent, to 295

fils. Mobile telecommunications jumped to 820 fils from 790.

In Saudi Arabia, the index partly reversed the previous week's gains to end two per cent down at 129.89 points. Volumes slumped 45 per cent, after soaring 54.7 per cent the week before.

Good demand boosted

select United Arab Emirates shares but trade was otherwise thin as potential sellers held onto their stocks in the hope of further price rises.

Al Ain Al Ahlia insurance shares rose 20 dirhams to a record 1,000 dirhams. Al Dhafra insurance rose 15 dirhams to 630.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, JULY 3, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Early today handle collections and payments, and then you can look into new interests which appeal to you. Budget your money carefully.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Early today come to a fine agreement with your partners and later tonight you can handle them in a more modern way.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) There are many tasks ahead of you today, and you should handle them wisely. Impress fellow associates with your efficiency.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Plan just how to get your talents working more profitably and then get right into the assignments required thereon.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) This morning is fine for completing home problems, so pitch in early. This evening you can enjoy entertainment with good friends.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You can communicate well this morning with many benefits accruing, and later tonight the same is true at home.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) It is important to study what your financial status is today and plan to improve it. Set up necessary appointments for best results.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Early today go after your personal aims and later tonight you can handle business affairs very nicely. Be happy.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Be clever in going after personal goals during the day today, and try not to criticise another person.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Plan how to gain those wishes which mean much to you and then carry through in a positive manner.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Early this morning attend to some important matter, and later today you can go after your most personal goals. Be with good friends.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You made a fine plan for the new week and this is the day to get started on it and get good results.

Birthstone of July: Ruby — Tiger's Eye

U.S. economy grows at 2.7% for first quarter

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. economy grew at a 2.7 per cent annual rate in the first quarter of 1995, according to final report figures the Commerce Department released Friday.

Analysts had been expecting the 2.7 per cent rate which was unchanged from the initial government estimates for gross domestic pro-

duct.

Experts said the second quarter, which ended Friday, will have even lower figures, possibly even showing that the economy shrank. They did not, however, predict a recession, and many point to a modest recovery by the year's end.

The first-quarter figure was

barely more than half the growth charted in the previous quarter. Fourth-quarter 1994 figures came in at 5.1 per cent.

The GDP increased \$36.3 billion at an annual rate from January through March. It had increased \$66.8 billion for the last three months of 1994.

Inflation was slightly up,

but within the moderate range.

The GDP 4.1 per cent in 1994 turning in the strongest growth in 10 years. The first-quarter slowdown of this year was the weakest showing since the third quarter of 1993 when it also hit 2.7 per cent.

The figures showed con-

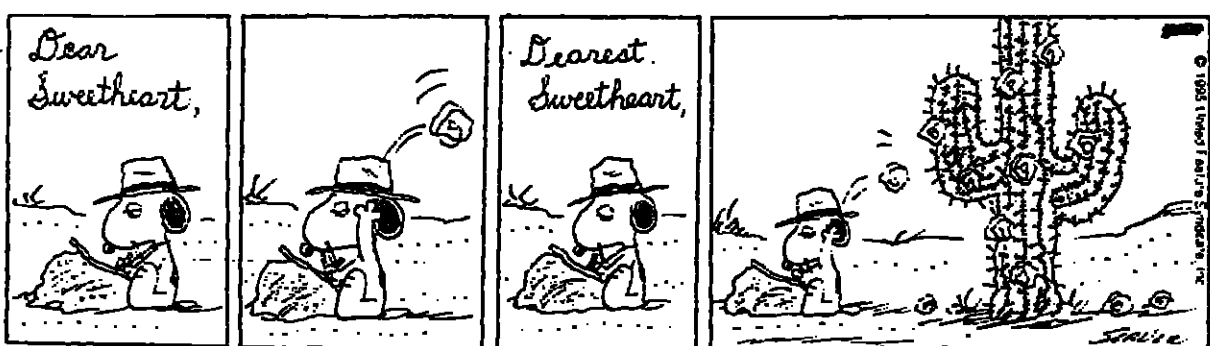
sumer spending was weaker than previously predicted, but higher net exports and business investment in durable goods offset the lower spending.

The mixed figures came ahead of Wednesday's meeting of the Federal Reserve board Federal Open Market Committee meeting. The ses-

sion will determine if the Fed is going to lower key interest rates or hold them.

The financial markets, which have been on an upward spiral recently, dropped back Thursday on reports of new economic strength which caused investor concern that the Fed would not cut interest rates.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



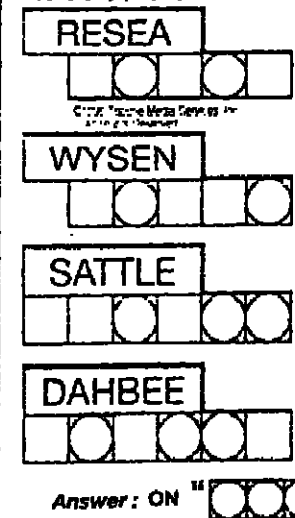
THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen



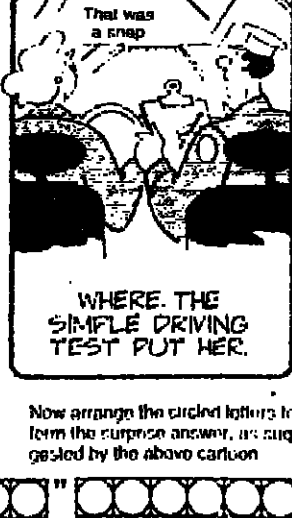
JUMBLE

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



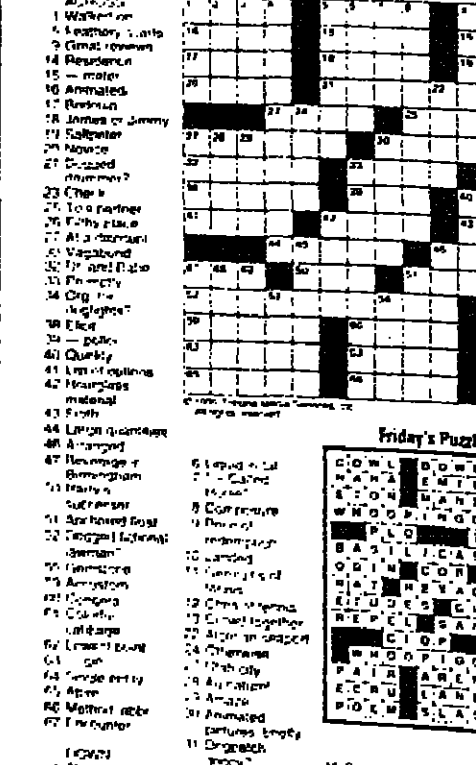
THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argenton



THE Daily Crossword

by Sefton Davars



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Business Daily Beat

Tourism revenues to rise by 50%

Jordan's revenues in the tourism sector this year are expected to increase by 50 per cent, compared to the previous year, Jordanian businessman Ziad Innab said. Mr. Innab, who is the chairman of the board of directors of the company owning the InterContinental Hotel, said hotel occupancy rates until last month were around 90 per cent. He said occupancy rates in five-star hotels currently stand at 70 per cent. He said that the recovery witnessed in the tourism sector has prompted investors to found new hotels and other tourism establishments. He said his company was currently working on expanding and modernising the hotel by increasing investments by \$12-13 million. This process, he noted, will increase the number of hotel rooms by 120, bringing the total number of rooms to 470 (Al Aswaq).

**** THE MINISTRY of Public Works and Housing** will within the coming two weeks, refer a tender to expand the 72-kilometre, two-lane Ras Al Naqab road into a four-lane road, according to Director of the ministry's roads department Mohamad Ensour. Mr. Ensour said the JD 34 million project will be financed by the World Bank, the European Investment Bank and the Jordanian Treasury (Al Ra'i).

**** PRIME MINISTER Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker** said the government still owns 10,200 shares in the Cairo Amman Bank. The statement was made by Sharif Zeid in answer to a query by Lower House of Parliament member Fawwaz Zu'bi (Al Aswaq).

**** MINISTER OF Finance Basel Jaraneh** has recommended that the Council of Ministers exempt confectionary stores from paying sales tax. The exemption will be included in an amendment to the sales tax law which will be discussed soon by the Lower House of Parliament. The House will debate raising the tax from a current seven per cent to 10 per cent. President of the Restaurant Owners Association Yassin Akash said it was unfair to charge taxes on sweets and noted that this might lead to reducing the volume of sales. He said that in spite of the introduction of the tax, restaurant owners have not hiked the prices of sweets produced by them (Al Dustour).

**** THE COUNCIL of Ministers** has decided to set up a ministerial committee to study the prospect of carrying out a petroleum pipeline project between Jordan and Iraq aiming at reducing the cost of transporting oil to the Kingdom and reducing damages caused to roads as a result of transporting oil by trucks. The committee includes the ministers of planning, public works and housing, postal services and communications, transport and energy and mineral resources (Al Dustour).

Officials extend deadline in scramble to salvage global finance deal

GENEVA (AP) — European Union trade ministers stepped in Friday to try to salvage a global pact that would liberalise trade in banking, insurance and securities with only limited U.S. participants, officials said.

With barely an hour to spare, the ministers persuaded other World Trade Organisation (WTO) countries to extend for four weeks the deadline that was to fall at Friday midnight.

The EU moved hours after hopes of a landmark agreement were scuttled when the United States rejected the package as inadequate.

The world has been working for the last 18 months to finalise an accord that would enable firms that deal in the huge and expanding financial services market to operate more freely in foreign countries.

Failure would be a blow to world trade liberalisation prospects and could damage the credibility of the fledgling WTO overseeing the negotiations.

Faced with rejection by the world's largest economy, as the deadline approached,

European Union trade ministers and ambassadors convened in an emergency session in Geneva to consider a rescue package.

The EU ministers and ambassadors won full WTO backing for the extension soon after they agreed to postpone the deadline to July 28.

"We are determined to use these weeks to keep the offers on the table or even improve them," said Peter Guilford, spokesman for EU Trade Commissioner Leon Brittan. "It's important there's no backsliding."

The EU will try for an interim agreement of three-four years, he said.

Delegates Thursday described as a "bombshell" the U.S. block of the long-negotiated market-opening measures which were offered by around 80 countries.

Washington said the offers from some South East Asian countries were inadequate. It said giving in to over-restrictive financial laws in some countries would allow "free riders" to profit from other more liberal markets.

However, the chief U.S. negotiator Jeffrey Lang said

the United States may be ready to participate more fully at a later date if WTO members decide on an interim agreement.

WTO Director General Renato Ruggiero called the U.S. pullback "extremely disappointing."

Speaking to the American International Club in Geneva Friday he warned: "A failure here could be bad news not only for the global economy and its growth prospects, but also for the (WTO) multi-lateral system and for all its member countries, including the United States."

He added that "there is no guarantee that bilateral negotiations outside the WTO can yield better results than those available now."

Financial services is a huge potential growth area for trade but was left out of a wide-ranging trade liberalisation pact sealed in December 1993 because Washington contended the offers from some developing countries to open up their financial markets were inadequate.

A deadline for the accord was fixed for June 30 this year in the hopes of reaching

a better deal. Washington has said that from July 1 it will back down from its open market offer of equal treatment for all made in December 93 and reserve the right to offer better market access to those countries who offer better deals to U.S. firms.

This contravenes a key WTO rule of offering equal access to all countries.

A senior ambassador to the WTO, speaking on condition that he not be named said a powerful industrial lobby in the United States had been putting pressure on the administration not to accept poor market opening offers saying this would be unfair to American companies.

The talks have been overshadowed by the recent U.S. dispute with Japan over automobiles, but in economic terms they are potentially more important.

International banking transactions among countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), totalled \$40 billion in 1992 and exports in insurance services were worth \$50 billion, according to the WTO.

Top Indian official gives pledge on reforms

PARIS (R) — India's finance secretary assured international donors on Friday the country's free-market reforms would not be derailed by national elections due within a year.

"There is a very broad consensus across the political parties on the broad direction of reform," Montek Singh

Ahluwalia told a news conference. "India is on a path of reform which is not going to be derailed."

His comments came after a World Bank meeting in Paris where donor nations and multinational agencies pledged \$6.75 billion, up from the previous year's \$6.0 billion. Of that amount, some

40 per cent was in grants and interest-free loans.

There has been investor concern that the elections could mean the reforms launched in 1991 amid charges by some politicians that the changes are benefiting only the wealthy.

Mr. Ahluwalia would not comment on reports that a review panel set up by the new government of Maharashtra had urged scrapping a \$2.1 billion power project to be built by Enron Development Corp. of the United States without compensation.

But he underlined no decision had been taken yet.

He rejected suggestions the controversy stemming from complaints the power to be generated would be too costly and that the deal had not been offered to public tender could send a chill through foreign investors.

"Virtually all the newly elected chief ministers (of states) have been going abroad and they have certainly not been taking a message that is negative on reform," he said.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET				
HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - SHEIKHANI				
TELEPHONE: 607170 / 663170				
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 02/07/1995				
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PIG	520	114400	221.000	220.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	4646	21224	4.620	4.670
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	250	348	1.390	1.380
THE HOUSING BANK	6300	68363	8.200	8.230
JORDAN KIWAT BANK	6750	19103	2.810	2.830
JORDAN GULF BANK	2600	3355	1.290	1.300
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	6016	22410	3.770	3.740
UNION BANK FOR SAVING & INVESTMENT	580	2649	4.590	4.570
BUSINESS BANK	2110	8346	3.990	3.950
BEIT KHALA SAVINGS/INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	130	148	3.650	3.650
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	9450	10811	1.130	1.120
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	2500	4160	1.690	1.660
BANKS SECTOR	43942	275895	INDEX NUMBER: 182.00	CHANGE: -0.41%
INSURANCE SECTOR	50	71	INDEX NUMBER: 138.12	CHANGE: -0.00%
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	21750	36898	1.700	1.710
VEHICLES OWNERS FEDERATION	229	1487	6.500	6.500
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	116650	705733	6.030	6.050
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	100	277	2.800	2.770
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	700	1610	2.340	2.300
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	1700	1953	1.180	1.160
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	250	830	3.300	3.320
SERVICES SECTOR	141379	748797	INDEX NUMBER: 132.21	CHANGE: -0.02%
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	2665	10179	3.810	3.830
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	17200	51993	3.070	3.050
THE ARAB POSTAGE	500	2946	5.150	5.100
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	732	7641	10.420	10.490
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THE JORDAN WORSTED MILLS	1250	9981	8.120	8.000
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	4082	20555	5.130	5.050
THE PUBLIC KINTING	250	788	3.250	3.150
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ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY	850	4890	5.900	5.750
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	18850	9254	4.90	4.90
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RAPIA INDUSTRIES	12250	14945	1.250	1.200
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	18150	42670	2.430	2.310
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	500	1120	2.300	2.240
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	850	2766	3.270	3.250
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	10260	22195	2.170	2.170
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	4750	9028	1.900	1.910
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	108245	244244	INDEX NUMBER: 132.41	CHANGE: -0.38%
GRAND TOTAL	293616	1269007	INDEX NUMBER: 157.33	CHANGE: -0.36%
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET		159985		
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET		206635		

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (June 26-June 30, 1995)

AMMAN — The U.S. unit rose modestly against the yen and sterling at the end of last week, while stabilising against the mark. It ended the week 0.35 per cent higher against the yen and 0.78 per cent higher against sterling.

The dollar appreciated against other major currencies Monday, especially against European currencies. Political uncertainty in Great Britain after news that right wing British cabinet minister, John Redwood, had decided to challenge John Major for the leadership of the conservative party contributed to the dollar's rise.

The U.S. unit declined against the mark and yen Tuesday, while appreciating marginally against sterling. It retreated to 1.3808 marks during trading hours, following the release of the U.S. Consumer Confidence report showing a decrease to 92.8 in June, compared to 102 in the previous month. The dollar rose later that day, however, affected by short covering.

The dollar rose against other major currencies Wednesday, following news that the U.S. and Japan had reached a trade agreement concerning the auto sector. The agreement was reached only hours before U.S. trade sanctions against Japan were to take effect.

The U.S. unit retreated against other major currencies Thursday, however, affected by scepticism by some market participants concerning the U.S.-Japan trade deal the previous day. According to these participants, not only would the deal be difficult to implement, but it also covers only a small fraction of trade between the two countries. As such, they believe that the deal will have a minimum impact on the U.S. trade deficit. Meanwhile, fears of possible joint central bank intervention to prop up the dollar limited its decline.

The dollar rose Friday, influenced by the release of the University of Michigan Consumer Confidence Report showing a rise to 92.7 in June, compared to 89.8 in the previous months. Meanwhile, the dollar was little influenced by the release of the University of Chicago Purchasing Managers Index showing a decrease from 53.5 in May, to 47.6 in June.

The U.S. unit, thus ended the week at 1.3815 marks, 84.65 yen and at \$1.5950 to sterling.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	Friday June - 23 - 1995 Close	Friday June - 30 - 1995 Close	Percent Change
Sterling Pound*	1.6075	1.5950	(-0.78) %
Deutsche Mark	1.3853	1.3815	0.28 %
Swiss Franc	1.1475	1.1485	(0.09) %
French Franc	4.8620	4.8415	0.42 %
Japanese Yen	84.35	84.65	(0.35) %

Para-Currency Interest Rates*

Currency	1-Month (%)	1-Year (%)	1-Month (%)	1-Year (%)
U.S. Dollar	5.87	5.50	5.87	5.87
Sterling Pound	6.50	7.12	6.60	7.49
Deutsche Mark	4.31	4.52	4.34	4.43
Swiss Franc	2.93	3.12	2.87	3.12
French Franc	6.88	6.25	6.96	6.25
Japanese Yen	1.21	0.96	1.73	0.93

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: July - 02 - 1995

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6920	0.6940
Sterling Pound	1.1015	1.1070
Deutsche Mark	0.5002	0.5027
Swiss Franc	0.6018	0.6048
French Franc	0.1428	0.1435
Japanese Yen*	0.8169	0.8210
Dutch Guilder	0.4467	0.4489
Swedish Krona		
Italian Lira*	0.0424	0.0426
Belgian Franc		

* Per 100

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Parma sign Stoichkov from Barcelona

VARNA, Bulgaria (R) — European footballer of the year Hristo Stoichkov said on Saturday he had joined Parma of Italy from Barcelona.

"My Barcelona period has ended and now, as a Parma player, I will be seeking new victories," Stoichkov said at his Black Sea holiday retreat.

"From now on I will think how to win Italy's champions title with Parma," the Bulgarian World Cup star said in an interview with the Bulgarian radio station seven days.

"In two days, from Tuesday, I will be Parma's player," added Stoichkov, who posed with his wife for a Reuters photographer at his Varna hotel on Saturday night.

He then left with friends — including World Cup team mate Yordan Lechkov who plays for Germany's Hamburgs — for a restaurant in the Black Sea resort to celebrate his new contract.

Stoichkov, denying discussing financial conditions with Parma, said he has chosen the Italian team because they were the first to approach him with concrete offers and he liked their style of play.

But Italian television reported from Parma that Stoichkov had agreed to a three-year contract and the deal was worth an estimated 25 billion lire (\$15 million), half going to the player and the rest to Barcelona.

It said the contract was signed in Barcelona on Saturday in the presence of executives of the former Spanish champions and Parma director general Giambattista Pastorello.

Stoichkov is expected in Italy on Monday for a medical examination.

Parma, an ambitious club who only won promotion to Serie A in 1990, have since won the European Cup Winners' Cup in 1993, reached the final following season and taken the UEFA Cup the season after that.

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Tarango tantrum upstages Agassi win

LONDON (R) — Unheralded but no longer unsung California Jeff Tarango walked on the wild side at Wimbledon on Saturday, defaulting in dramatic circumstances to upstage a fighting victory by Andre Agassi.

Accusing the umpire of bias against him and of awarding past matches to other players for friendship, Tarango capped a tantrum over a service call in his third-round match with German Alexander Mronz by stomping off court in a mood of thunder.

"You are the most corrupt official in the game," the 26-year-old American shouted at French umpire Bruno Rebeuh before he departed in a manner unprecedented in Wimbledon's long, colourful and chequered history.

No player had ever defaulted himself before, though Briton Tim Henman was defaulted from a doubles on Wednesday after hitting a ballgirl with a ball struck in anger.

Tarango, whose wife Benedicte later slapped Rebeuh, levelled his accusations against the umpire at a press conference and maintained he was justified in his action "because I don't feel a player has any defence these days in getting some kind of justice when things go wrong against him."

Top seed Agassi survived a predictably bruising encounter with fellow American David Wheaton, winning 6-2, 3-6, 6-4, 6-2 to take a 4-3 edge in his lifetime series against a player he grew up with.

"David plays erratic but big tennis and it doesn't lend to feeling good about your



Jeff Tarango of the U.S. in discussion with a Wimbledon referee after a dispute line call. Tarango finally walked off the court leaving Alexander Mronz to win the game (AFP photo)

game. I just feel glad about getting through it," he said.

Asked his opinion about Tarango's outburst, Agassi said: "I think it's a sad situation. Maybe he should have taken an hour or so before he came into the press-room here, to regroup a little bit. Nobody wins in a situation like that. There's no reason to turn it into a circus."

He next faces the 117th-ranked Mronz, whose score against Tarango read 7-6, 3-1 default.

Third seed Boris Becker raised his game a notch after dropping the first set and beat Dutchman Jan Siemerink 2-6, 6-2, 6-2, 6-4. Next he will face the towering Belgian outsider Dick Norman, who continued his amazing progress with a 6-4, 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 victory over Australian Todd Woodbridge.

The towering 2.04 metres Norman, ranked 176th, is the first lucky loser from the qualifying draw final round eve to get to the Wimbledon

the umpire overruled the linesman and called a Tarango service good.

He ordered the point to be replayed. Tarango felt strongly he should have been awarded an ace.

His protest brought a penalty point, then loss of game, at which juncture Tarango had had enough — and off he went.

Now Tarango faces a substantial fine and a possible suspension after the case and his accusations are investigated.

Tarango went on to attack the lack of recourse he feels players have.

"We don't have player representatives any more — the title has been changed to tour manager," he said.

"We don't have anybody who'll defend us when we're fined. It just goes straight to an appeal where one person decides and that's it. People just take money out of our pockets every week for fines and we can't appeal to anyone."

"We have to sue the tour, or whatever body fines us, in order to try to get our \$500 or \$1,000 back but it makes no sense for us to try to do this because the lawyer fees alone are more than that."

fourth round. He beat former champions Pat Cash and Stefan Edberg earlier.

The only upset in either singles came when Inés Gorrochategui of Argentina defeated women's 10th seed Natasha Zvereva of Belarus 2-6, 6-4, 6-4.

Steffi Graf blitzed Dutchwoman Kristie Boogert 6-1, 6-0 but Japanese sixth seed Kimiko Date started slowly before getting the measure of American Tami Whitlinger Jones 1-6, 6-3, 6-3.

But it all paled into insignificance beside Tarango, who was himself labelled insignificant by one commentator.

Tarango's problems in the match, other than finding Rebeuh in the chair, came when

(1.98 metre) American said. "Until they stop cutting the grass shorter and shorter as the tournament goes on, it's always going to be fast."

"The court today was 30, 25 per cent faster than it was two days ago and the grass is dying quickly. I'm sure it's because of the sun and the abuse it's getting but they're also cutting the grass much shorter," said Martin.

"In my lawnmowing little experience, the shorter you cut it the easier it dies, which is going to make it quick."

Graf likes it hot: Wimbledon's current heat wave is good news for Steffi Graf. The German player, who is bidding for a sixth singles titles, may not have an opponent that can beat her in the draw but her worst enemy remains a chronic back injury.

"It is important the weather stays warm — the warmer the better — so that my back does not stiffen up," says 26-year-old Graf.

"I've been living with this problem for eight or nine months now. There has been no real trouble with it this week but I've had the occasional loss of concentration worrying maybe that it will come."

Language barrier: Andre Agassi has been keeping an ear on Britain's tennis import from Canada — Greg Rusedski.

"I'm getting a kick out of watching him try to pick up the English accent," said Agassi, who, like Britain's new Davis Cup hope, is safely through to the third-round of the men's singles.

"He's started using words like 'brilliant' and 'lovely' in his press conferences!"

Wimbledon notebook

* Pam Shriver has had so much trouble with her shoulder she's become something

of an expert on injuries. So it could be bad news for Steffi Graf when the American says the German's back injury could finish her career.

"I believe her back will be bad for the rest of her career," said Shriver, who turned 33 Tuesday and is making her 16th appearance at Wimbledon.

"She must try to keep it contained and keep it from getting worse. But that's easier said than done and I'm sure it is on her mind all the time."

"I would not be surprised if at any time she said 'hey, I have battled through this pain as long as I can and it's time to let it go,'" said Shriver, who needed surgery in 1990 to repair a loose and unstable shoulder.

Graf, trouble to make it to the fourth round. She overpowered dutch player Kristie Boogert 6-1, 6-0 Saturday.

"Naturally, I can't answer for her," Shriver said. "But I think this year is the year to say 'is it going to get worse or is it going to stay as it is.'"

* Stick to tennis, Pete: Pete Sampras admits he hits the ball like John Daly. The golf ball, that is.

The defending Wimbledon champion says he's an enthusiastic golfer when he's away from the tennis court. Renowned for his big serves, he admits some of it rubs off on the golf course.

"I like to give the ball a real belt like Daly," he said. "I swing all out and I guess I can hit it 300 yards at times. "Mind you, Daly has a lot more control than me. My long drives often finish in the trees."

Daly probably wouldn't agree, but Sampras believes that golf isn't as tough as tennis.

"Golf should be easy," he said. "After all, the ball never moves and you try to produce the same swing all the time."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Algeria replaces interior minister

PARIS (R) — Algerian President Liamine Zeroual has removed hardline Interior Minister Abdul Rahmane Meziane-cherif, a staunch opponent of Muslim militants. Algerian state-run radio said on Sunday. The radio, quoting an official statement, said Mustapha Ben Mensour had been named to replace Mr. Meziane-cherif and that the change was made at the proposal of Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi.

Iran will support what Syria wants

NICOSIA (AFP) — Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani on Sunday repeated his opposition to the Middle East peace process, but said that if Syria was happy with a peace deal with Israel then Tehran would be too. He told Cable News Network (CNN) that a peace accord between Israel and Syria was a "hypothesis" which would have to be seen before Iran could adopt a position on it. "If there is an agreement and Syria is content with it, we will be content," he said. But he added the "peace process is not a peace." It is "fire under ashes." The Iranian leader added that his country was not taking any "practical measures" against the peace process, implicitly rejecting accusations that his country supports international "terrorism." "If there are Palestinian groups fighting, that is their right," he said.

Yemeni authorities foil hijacking bid

SANAA (AFP) — Yemeni authorities on Sunday foiled an attempted hijacking of an Ethiopian plane from Sanaa international airport only minutes before take-off. The Ethiopian hijacker brought a bomb on board but security services discovered the explosive just "minutes before the plane took off for Addis Ababa," an official spokesman said. The would-be hijacker, who had hidden the bomb in an electrical item, was arrested on board. An initial inquiry identified the hijacker as 28-year-old Moushif Bayo. Authorities said he was planning to force the pilot to fly to Kampala, the capital of Uganda. The Yemeni spokesman did not say what Bayo's motives were, but added an inquiry had been launched.

'Powell would run neck-and-neck against Clinton'

NEW YORK (AP) — President Bill Clinton and former U.S. military chief Colin Powell would be in a dead heat in a head-to-head presidential election, a Time Magazine-CNN poll found. Assuming he runs for the Republican Party, Mr. Powell, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was favoured over Mr. Clinton 44 per cent to 41 per cent in the poll of 1,000 people conducted June 21-22. Others said they were not sure or would not vote. The survey, in the issue of Time due out Monday, had a margin of error of plus or minus three per cent, meaning Mr. Clinton and Mr. Powell would be in a statistical dead heat. Mr. Clinton, however, would narrowly win a three-way race against Republican Bob Dole and Mr. Powell running as an independent. In the three-way contest, 33 per cent favoured Mr. Clinton, 29 per cent Mr. Powell and 27 per cent Mr. Dole.

Iranian group warns against press law reform

TEHRAN (AFP) — An Iranian opposition group warned Sunday that a proposed new press law would further restrict political and cultural freedom in the Islamic republic. The nationalist Liberation Movement of Iran (LMI), one of the rare opposition groups to be tolerated here, said in a statement that "anti-democratic" changes outlined in the draft law would have "dangerous consequences" for the country's fledgling press freedom. They would "seal a hole of freedom our people have gained over the years," said the group, headed by Ebrahim Yazdi. The proposal, to be discussed by parliament next month, would empower the Islamic Culture Ministry to close down newspapers and periodicals if they are seen as violating the law. As the law stands, any charges against the press must be brought to a court and put before a jury in an open trial. The reform proposal has sparked controversy among politicians and journalists who see it as a move by the government to clamp down on press freedom. The LMI argued that the law, if passed, "would lead to new restrictions and to growing interference by the executive power in the duties of the judiciary."

Egypt papers cash in on Mubarak wave

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian newspapers have cashed in on the wave of popularity enjoyed by President Hosni Mubarak since his escape from an assassination attempt last week. Two government-owned newspapers — Al-Ahram and Al-Akhar — said on Sunday they had made nearly \$2.0 million from advertisements congratulating Mr. Mubarak on his escape. Al-Ahram said it made 4.72 million Egyptian (\$1.38 million) in the three days after the attempt on Mubarak's life last Monday in Addis Ababa. Al-Akhar said it made 1.63 million pounds (\$478,000) over the same period.

Hamas weekly shuts down in protest at PNA

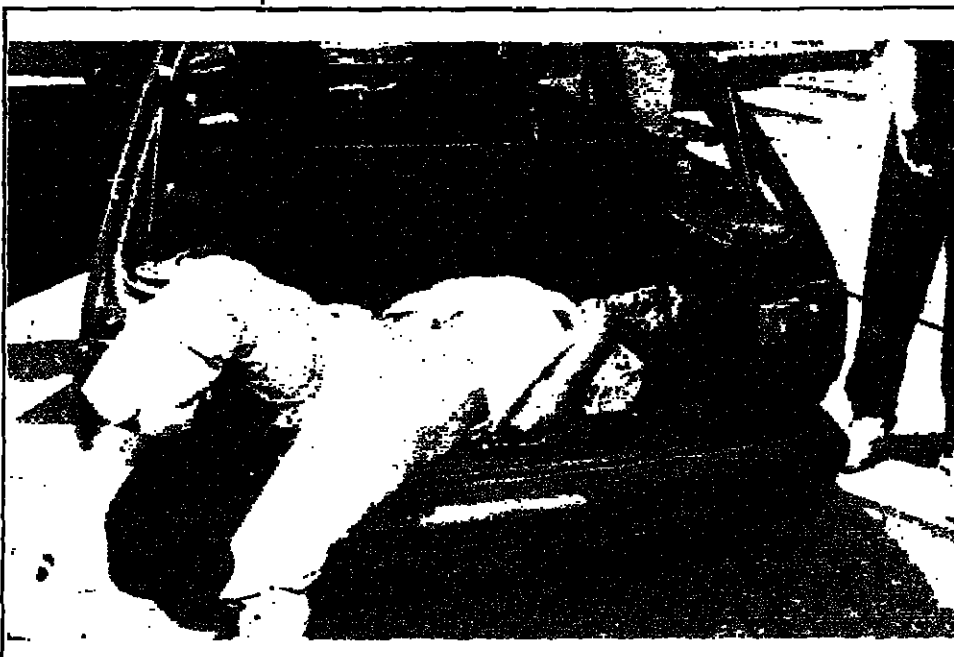
GAZA CITY (AFP) — Al-Watan, the newspaper of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, has suspended publication in a protest against the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). "Our general manager is still in jail and we will not announce a suspension of our publication until further notice," the weekly announced in a statement Sunday. Al-Watan charged the self-rule authority with "not respecting democratic rights any more, especially the freedom of expression and opinion and press freedom." The announcement came two weeks after PNA President Yasser Arafat lifted a three-month ban imposed by a military court on Al-Watan (The Homeland) for inciting revolt. The court also jailed Al-Watan's general manager Saeed Abu Mesameh for two years. The protest move followed Hamas accusations on Saturday that Palestinian security forces tortured detained leaders from the group and shaved off the beards in an insult to Islam.

Sudan accuses Eritrea of provocations

KHARTOUM (AFP) — A Sudanese army spokesman on Sunday accused Eritrea for the first time of sparking provocations at the border between the two countries. "Eritrean elements constantly commit provocations at the border," General Mohammed Bashir Suleiman said without elaborating, cited in the independent daily Akbar Al-Yom. Asmara broke off relations with Khartoum in December and in June hosted a conference of Sudanese opposition groups seeking to form a unified platform for overthrowing Sudan's regime, in place since 1989. "Sudan is capable of defending its security and stability," Mr. Suleiman said. The general said that plans by the opposition's armed wing, the Sudanese Legion, to carry the civil war in the south to the north was "destined to fail because it does not correspond with reality in Sudan."

Girl raped, strangled and dumped in garbage

DUBAI (AFP) — A seven-year-old girl was raped and strangled before her body was dumped in a garbage can here in the United Arab Emirates, a newspaper reported Sunday. A road sweeper found her body stuffed into a bag that he had removed from a garbage can early on Saturday, investigators told the Al-Khaleej newspaper. The girl appeared to have been strangled by one or more people after she had been raped, they said. She was identified by her parents who had reported her missing five days before. The victim's nationality was not given.



SHELL VICTIM: A man killed in a mortar were killed and dozens wounded in random shelling of the city by Bosnian Serbs (see page one) (AFP photo)

House votes against cutting down working hours

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Deputies Sunday voted down several proposals calling for the reduction of working hours and days but left the door open for private sector employers to do so on their own.

The votes came as the Lower House of Parliament continued its debate of a 145-article draft labour law. The House had approved 50 articles before Sunday's session during which lawmakers adopted another 10 articles with some amendments.

Also discussed during the session was a draft law on the Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ). The draft legislation drew strong controversy as some deputies saw it unconstitutional and others said it would increase the tax burden on citizens.

The discussion on the WAJ draft law, which would amend a 1964 law that is still in effect, came at the outset of the session

and the House finally referred the legislation to the Financial Committee after reversing an earlier decision to lodge it with the Judiciary Committee citing Constitutional reasons.

President of the Judiciary Committee, Abdul Karim Dughmi, said the law should be either returned to the government for reconsideration or referred to the Financial Committee. He said the government has been levying taxes for over 10 years without having the right legislation to do so.

The 1964 law stipulates that taxes should be levied for a period of 20 years. Arguing that this period ended in 1984, Islamist Deputy Abdul Rahim Okour said the government has been collecting taxes "illegally" since 1984.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh said that the government did not intend to levy extra taxes from citizens.

"The government had no intention to increase the

burdens on citizens. What happened was merely a conflict between laws themselves," he said.

After settling the dispute over the JWA law, the House returned to the draft labour law and went into a heated debate over the possibility of reducing working hours and days in line with developed countries.

The proposal to reduce the working days from six to five was made by Deputy Abdullah Ensour who said Jordan should follow the example of developed countries.

"The notion that our country is backward and we have to work double that of developed countries is invalid," he said. "We should not overload workers with more working hours while all developed countries are in the process of reducing working hours to 36 and have already five working days."

Mr. Rawabdeh said this option was already studied in the past but did not

(Continued on page 7)

Arab League is divided over 'pact of honour' to avert wars

CAIRO (AFP) — Arab League efforts to formulate a "pact of honour" to end wars between Arab countries have run into divisions because some delegates are being unrealistic and living in "fantasy land," a diplomat said on Sunday.

A league committee, which met once previously on June 12, gathered on Sunday to consider a draft agreement for the pact, which was first proposed by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in March.

"The pledge will include general bases and principles to govern inter-Arab relations," Hamad Hareb Al-Habsi, the representative of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), said after the meeting.

The committee — comprising Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain, the UAE, Iraq and Kuwait, and for the first time this session Qatar, Libya, Morocco and the Palestinians —

aims to finalise a draft pact for approval at a September meeting of the Arab League Council.

"There is agreement on a framework for putting inter-Arab relations on new foundations," Iraqi delegate Nabil Nigm said.

"Iraq will work with serious effort to revive the Arab situation with a new formula for relations which guarantees Arab national security," Mr. Nigm said.

Mr. Mubarak proposed the pledge at the March session of the Arab League Council in an effort to restore Arab solidarity which was fractured by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the Gulf war in 1990-91.

But an Arab diplomat close to Sunday's session said that the members "have different attitudes."

He said some delegates wanted "to count on the Arab League Charter to establish a new idea of rela-

tions," which was "unrealistic." They were living in a "fantasy land," he said.

"Of course we all support the Arab League charter, but the pledge must deal directly with the reality of the disaster of (Arab) relations and the loss of security."

"When are we going to work in a rational framework?" he said.

The diplomat said the pledge must stick to three main security principles: "Preventing the occurrence of crises, preventing their explosion and an Arab commitment against crises. There must be a mechanism to treat crises."

"Anything outside these principles means getting lost in labyrinth."

Nevertheless, the diplomat said he expected the committee would reach a draft formula for the pledge in its next meeting in late July. He did not specify the exact date.

19 injured in huge fire near Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — At least 19 people suffered from smoke inhalation in a huge fire that cut the main highway between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem on Sunday, medical officials said.

The flames, whipped by high winds, spread quickly towards Jerusalem. The western outskirts of the city were inundated with the smell of burning wood and ashes drifted down onto the city's streets.

Police spokesman Eric Bar Chen told Reuters four communities west of Jerusalem had been evacuated. He said the villages had sustained damage from the blaze but to what extent was not yet known.

Hundreds of soldiers, policemen and civilian volunteers joined firemen battling the blaze.

Avraham Hulbersberg, of Israel's emergency medical service Magen David Adom told Israel Radio: "We know of about 19 injured who are being evacuated to Jerusalem."

Israel Radio said fire-fighters suspected arsonists caused the blaze. Mr. Bar Chen later said fire officials had meant the "human element" could have caused it, meaning, he said, a carelessly tossed cigarette might have ignited the blaze.

Hundreds of people fled the four communities in the fire's path.

"We saw a long line of people streaming out of New Ilan on foot, some with their animals, camels, a donkey," witness Rachel Goldberg said.

Helicopters dumped water on the burning forests. The Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway in the area of the fire was closed. The flames had jumped the expressway in one spot, officials said.

A forest ranger told Israel Radio from the site:

"The fire is very, very big. It has really destroyed thousands of dunams. It has

also already entered communities..." Moshe Ben-Aharon said.

He said the fire extended eight kilometres from the town of Beit Shemesh to Shorsh, a moshav (semi-communistic community) about 10 kilometres west of Jerusalem.

Cars were backed up for kilometres in either direction. Traffic also came to a standstill in many parts of Jerusalem.

Residents were evacuated from a cluster of towns several kilometres west of Jerusalem as the flames approached. Police identified the towns as New Ilan, Shorsh, Shoava, Telstone, Kiriyat Yaarim and Yad Hashmona.

Several houses and a small hotel were ablaze in Shorsh. In Telstone, a small community of ultra-orthodox Jews, dozens of people left on foot. Some women pushed baby strollers loaded with suitcases, and one man in a black coat and hat carried a Torah scroll in his arms. Others got into buses.

Along the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway, flames shot 20 metres into the air and employees at a nearby gas station hosed down fuel tanks with water.

Police van blocked the road, barring motorists from driving past the fire. An alternate route was also jammed.

"I propose that anyone who does not urgently need to get out of Jerusalem or go to Jerusalem stay home," said Ido Gutmann, head of traffic police.

Asheles far as downtown Jerusalem and the smell of smoke permeated the city.

Record temperatures were measured in much of Israel on Sunday because of a hot desert wind, known in Hebrew as sharav.

In Tel Aviv, temperatures rose to 37 degrees Celsius, the highest for this day since 1884, meteorologists said.

Constitutional status snags Chechen talks

GROZNY (AFP) — Russian and Chechen negotiators trying to forge a peace deal here hit a major stumbling block Sunday when they

broached for the first time Chechenya's constitutional status, a Chechen leader said.

Chechen delegation head Usman Imaev said Sunday's talks had been dedicated to the thorny issue of the separatist-minded Caucasus republic's future status, but had yielded little progress.

"At the moment, no agreement looks likely," Mr. Imaev said, "but this is obviously not a question which can be discussed in a day."

Mr. Imaev's fortitude could not disguise the fact that the talks, held at the Grozny mission of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), had taken a turn for the worse Sunday.

Delegates emerged earlier than usual from a tense atmosphere, faces grim and lips sealed.

Russian delegates attributed the deterioration in what have been generally constructive talks to the fact that Chechenya's self-styled

president, Dzhokhar Dudayev, had failed to reply to a Russian "zero-option" initiative, Interfax said Sunday.

Under the initiative, all current political leaders in the war-torn republic — including Mr. Dudayev as well as Moscow's own protégés — would resign before new elections are held.

"Dudayev has not sent any sign that he is prepared to accept this zero option," the news agency quoted a Russian delegation source as saying.

Even if both sides agree on the "zero option" and on future elections, which Moscow wants held in November, the issue of Chechenya's constitutional status will remain tough to resolve.

It was Chechenya's declaration of independence in 1991 which ultimately prompted Russian troops to pour into the small North Caucasus republic in December, triggering the six-month war which has left thousands dead.

Mr. Imaev said Moscow remains committed to a prop-

(Continued on page 7)

COLUMN

Indonesia soothsayer to be tried for blasphemy

JAKARTA (R) — An Indonesian soothsayer will be tried next week for allegedly insulting Prophet Mohammad, one of his lawyers said Sunday.

"Permadi will be tried on July 6 in Sleman near Yogyakarta for insulting Islam and Prophet Mohammad," Ramdion Nanning told Reuters from Yogyakarta, 450 kilometres east of Jakarta. Mr. Permadi, who heads the Association of Indonesian Psychics, was accused of defaming the Prophet during a seminar last year in Yogyakarta in which he allegedly called Prophet Mohammad a dictator.

Nanning said his client was being detained at the Wirogunan Prison in Yogyakarta. If convicted, Mr. Permadi faces a maximum jail term of five years. The ruling Golkar Party has said it will sue the soothsayer over remarks he allegedly made in an interview with a radio station last year in which he compared Golkar with the banned Communist Party known as PKI.

Diana celebrates 34th birthday

LONDON (AFP) — Diana, the Princess of Wales, celebrated her 34th birthday by playing tennis and eating cucumber sandwiches with her two sons at their school in Ludgrove, in western London.

The princess, who seemed very relaxed, spent six hours with Prince William, 13, and Prince Harry, 10. The two boys finish their school year Wednesday.

Prince William will not be returning to Ludgrove but has been accepted at the famed Eton School.

Girl dies in fall from roller coaster

KANSAS CITY, Missouri (AFP) — A teenage girl was killed in a fall from a roller coaster that took its passengers for a whirlwind ride reaching speeds of up to 85 kilometres (53 miles) per hour. A friend who was riding with Ryan Bielby, 14, said the girl bar and the seat belt came undone when the train crested the top of a hill, a police officer said. But officials from the Worlds of Fun amusement park said all restraints were in place at the beginning and the end of the ride and that the lap bar could have only been unlocked with a tool.

Convicts escape during soccer match at prison

SANTIAGO (AFP) — Fifteen convicts managed to escape from the Renfo Prison south of here Saturday during a soccer match that captured the full attention of guards and fellow inmates. Police said the convicts went undetected when they climbed over a wall during the match but were soon spotted by officers in the streets of Rengo who shot two escapees and seized two others.

Japanese women linked to murder freed on bail

MANILA (AFP) — A Japanese woman accused of having her husband murdered so she could collect £1 million in life insurance has been released from a prison on bail, the Philippine News Agency (PNA) said Saturday.

Marie Uemura, 31, was freed after a municipal trial court judge in Talisay said he was convinced Uemura would not jump bail since the immigration authorities had barred her from leaving the country, the PNA report said. The woman's passport was confiscated by immigration authorities. Uemura was arrested by police Tuesday on charges of ordering the murder of her husband Moriaki Uemura, after the 32-year-old businessman was shot dead on June 17. Police alleged he was murdered so his 100 million yen (\$1.8 million) insurance policy.

Investigate charges

STON (AFP) — Japan announced it will investigate charges of practices in the U.S. Trade Representative's investigation of Japanese trade practices in Washington.

Sri Lanka soldiers shot and killed

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urges 'openness' — The director of the Energy Agency (IAEA) Hans Blix urged a maximum of openness in the building of a nuclear power station in Iran. He said Iran would show a maximum of openness if it agreed to let IAEA inspectors in. "Any important export of nuclear technology from Iran to other countries must be subject of concern for the outside world," he stated further that "even if inspectors have never seen any of the nuclear facilities in Iran, they are still in the process of implementing the safeguards agreement." He also stressed Iran's commitment to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

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